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THE

TRUE DEACONSHIP;

OR

STRICTURES ON A PAMPHLET

ENTITLED,

"THE SCRIPTURAL DEACON, &c."

BY DAVID SMITH.

"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back a part of the price of the land?"—Acts v. 3.

PHILADELPHIA:
WILLIAM S. YOUNG, PRINTER—50 NORTH SIXTH ST.

1847.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In appearing before the public, the writer of the following pages makes no apology. He is aware that many, whose opinions are entitled to respect, regard the pamphlet reviewed as unworthy of notice. Its intrinsic worthlessness he would not affect to deny, yet it is possible it may do harm. At any rate, truth is always worth defending. And as truths imbodied in our covenanted attainments, and sealed by the blood of our martyred fathers, are perverted and vilified by Mr. Nightingale, while at the same time he makes very high professions of regard for them, it has been thought a duty to unmask him. The writer has acted according to his own judgment in the case. If he has done or said any thing amiss, he only is accountable.

D. S.

Philadelphia, February, 1847.

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STRICTURES, &c.

"The Scriptural Deacon; an Inquiry into the distinct Rights of the Officers and People, in the Management of the temporal Concerns of the Church. By a Committee-man.

'Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.'—Acts xxvi. 1.
'Honour to whom honour is due.'—Romans xiii. 7.
'Neither as being lords over God's heritage.'—1 Peter v. 3.
New York: printed by William Osborn, 88 William St. 1845," pp. 48.

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A pamphlet with the above imposing title, made its appearance in the world several months ago. Of its author we know nothing, except what we gather from his work. He styles himself "a committee-man," —rather an indefinite designation, we should think, as he leaves his readers entirely in the dark respecting the nature of the committee of which he is the "man." His name, however, in plain English, is JOHN NIGHTINGALE, which he has set down in full at the end of his book, and which is of itself quite sufficient to distinguish him without the aid of empty titles.

The work itself is not exactly what the title page seems to indicate, but rather a sort of reply to certain paragraphs and phrases selected from a pamphlet entitled "The Deacon," published several years ago by Rev. J. M. Willson, of Philadelphia. It was evidently intended by its author, to be an *answer* to that work, and doubtless he and others of his class, conceit, for some of them have boasted, that he has utterly demolished "The Deacon." It is the third of a series of replies to that work, each by a different author. The first was the production of a "poor wise man" out west, entitled "The Consistory, &c.," which we believe has almost sunk into oblivion. The second of the series was a very *learned* performance, by Rev. C. B. M'Kee, late of Rochester, New York, entitled "Anti-deacon," for the publication of which he was censured by Synod, in 1843. These authors all take different and in many respects contradictory grounds. They differ as much from each other, as they do from the author of "The Deacon;" and yet they are all lauded as most excellent performances by the friends of the trustee system. Their appearance, one after another at considerable intervals, each taking a new and opposite position, shows their own estimate of their success at biting a file. It indicates, moreover, that however they may differ on the subject of deacons, or on any other subject, there exists among them a remarkable *unity* of purpose to put down "The Deacon" at all hazards. Mr. M'Kee gives no sort of credit to the "poor wise man," the "pioneer" of trusteeism, for his commendable efforts to set matters right. Nor does Mr. Nightingale give any "honour" to either of his "illustrious predecessors," for their seasonable and abundant labours. Indeed, on page seven, he attempts to give some reasons, why "The Deacon has not been answered," taking for granted that notwithstanding the publication of the works referred to, it had not yet been answered. He even hints that no *reply* to it had ever been written—apparently not considering Mr. M'Kee's production worthy the name of a *reply*. This is neither kind nor clever of Mr. Nightingale.

Our author appears in public as a controversialist, yet he is careful to have his readers understand that he is a marvellous proper man. To this end he politely informs us, in his introduction, that when he uses

the term "The Deacon," which he frequently does, he uniformly refers to the Rev. James M. Willson—*in order to avoid the appearance of personal disrespect.* A peculiar mode of avoiding personalities, truly.

The work begins and ends with a short advertisement addressed to the "Reader," in which the author expresses the hope that his readers "will neither refuse to read his essay, nor use their influence to keep it out of the hands of others." This expression of his hope, seems to us to be almost useless; for it is hardly to be supposed that any of his "*readers*" will *not read* his essay; and certainly few will use their influence to keep out of the hands of others a treat so rare and so rich.

The work itself consists, in the first place, of an introduction, then branches out into three chapters, in the first of which the "man" of the committee, as our author styles himself, proposes to state the question and arrange the preliminaries for the onset. The second chapter is a professed attempt to show that "The Deacon's" claim to the management of the temporalities of the church is not founded in scripture. The third and last chapter is an attempt to prove that "The Deacon's claim is not acknowledged in the standards of the church." He then winds up the concern with an appendix in which he claims the action of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod on the subject of Deacons, at its last meeting, as being in accordance with his views.

Before we proceed to a particular examination of our author's "arguments," we intend first, to notice some of the *peculiarities with which his work abounds.* In his introduction, our author with great apparent simplicity, confesses his ignorance of the principles of composition and correct grammatical construction,* but consoles himself with the reflection that his readers will generally be as ignorant as himself. This is quite a compliment to the intelligence of his readers, and shows a commendable determination on his part not to be disconcerted by trifles. After this confession, it might be thought that an ordinary sense of modesty and propriety, would have deterred him from a task to which he thus acknowledges himself incompetent. He says he was "induced" to undertake it by "a sense of duty, and the pressing solicitations of a few friends." We think most of his readers will agree with us when we say that had these friends advised him to attend to his business, and leave "The Deacon" to be answered by somebody who understood "correct grammatical construction," they would have given him a more friendly advice. But he seems, after all, to have a notion that he is no "*child* in intellect," for he hints that whatever may be said of his grammar, his "arguments," if they can only be "understood," are of great consequence. Well, if we can understand them, we shall see.

It seems to be a favourite object with our author, to create an impression, that the system he opposes is *new*, and his own *old.* And we are free to admit that if his repeated assertions, and his regular rounds of changes on the words *new*, *innovation*, *&c.*, on almost every page of his book, were proof, he has indeed made out a pretty strong case.† He has discernment enough to understand that a professed attachment

* Notwithstanding this confession of ignorance even of the English language, we find our author, on page 35, referring to the original Greek of the New Testament, and modestly giving us an improved translation. He is honest about it, however. He says "it does not become" him.

† It will be admitted, we suppose, without any peculiar stretch of charity, that the author of "The Deacon," unlike our author, has some knowledge of "composition," and of "correct grammatical construction," and of course some little acquaintance with the meaning of the language he

to the attainments of the church "is necessary in order to gain credence among Covenanters." Hence he attempts the double deception, first, of representing the author of the Deacon as having departed from the "footsteps of the flock;" and second, that he himself is walking therein. But notwithstanding his boasted professions of respect for his "covenanted forefathers" and "the footsteps of the flock," a very superficial examination of his work will make it evident that his respect goes no farther than profession. On page 18, speaking of the doctrines respecting the Deacon's office, which had been referred to by the author of "The Deacon" as held by our reforming ancestors, and for which they contended so long and suffered so much," he says,

"These opinions being given in answer to a very different question, their authors might have given *very different* opinions upon the point now before us."

Now we freely admit that the doctrines held by our "covenanted forefathers" are binding on us only so far as they are imbodied in the laws and covenants of the church. But we cannot admit for a moment that they were men of so little honesty as to change their opinions on one question, simply on the presentation of another. The "point now before us," namely, the extent of the deacon's power, is the very point on which they have given their opinions in the passages referred to as quoted by "The Deacon." And when they say that his power extended to "the collection and distribution of the whole ecclesiastical goods, and not to that only which was collected in manner of alms,"* and other expressions of like import, the "man" must have a "great respect" indeed for their character when he says they would have expressed a "very different opinion," had some other question been presented to them. Doubtless their opinion on any subject, would be an opinion having a relation to that particular subject, and of course on a subject having no relation to the deacon's power, would be different from their opinion respecting his power. On the question of purgatory or of the resurrection of the dead, for example, their opinions would have relation to those subjects and not to the Deacon's power. We presume nobody even doubted this. Our author's meaning then, if he meant any thing, must be that had some other question been presented to them, they would have expressed an opinion respecting the deacon's power, *contrary* to that which they have expressed. Now we do not pretend to know what the "question" was, in answer to which they gave the opinion that the Deacon's power extends to "the collection and distribution of the whole ecclesiastical goods, and not to that only which was collected in manner of alms," or whether this opinion was given in answer to *any* "question." Nor can we know to what question our friend imagines they would have answered that the Deacon's power does *not* extend to "the collection and distribution of the *whole*

uses. It will be evident to any one who will examine the work, although his knowledge of "grammatical construction" should be very limited, that it was not intended merely or chiefly for Covenanters, but for the Christian church at large. We presume the author never dreamed of the degree of ignorance and obstinacy which has subsequently been developed among Covenanters respecting the office of Deacon. Hence, while he requests the reader "not to reject at once propositions that may be new to him," he proposes nothing that is *new* to intelligent Covenanters, however new some of his propositions were known to be to others. He merely seeks to point out the "good old way" in which our venerated fathers walked, but from which so many of their degenerate sons have turned aside. The play, then, of this "man" (as he styles himself) on the words "*new*." "*pioneer*," &c., is perfectly *childish*. If he is indeed a "man," he ought to "put away such childish things."

* Second Book of discipline, Chap. IX.

ecclesiastical goods, &c.;" but we are inclined to think, although we feel a delicacy about expressing it, that the man who will thus impeach the honesty and integrity of our "covenanted forefathers," at the same time professing an extraordinary degree of respect for them, must be endowed with no small degree of arrogance, and a strong faith in the gullibility of his readers.

As a farther evidence that his respect for our "covenanted forefathers" is only pretence, we find him on page thirty-eight, endeavouring according to his ability, to turn to ridicule the "Second Book of Discipline." Speaking of it, he sneeringly observes, "to which some individuals have conceived an extraordinary attachment of late,"—and goes on to discourse of the "building of bridges, &c." And on page forty-one, speaking of the Westminster Divines and the church of Scotland, he says, "they, seeing that the officers of the church had been formerly lording it over the people in this matter, &c." Here we have evidence not only of his want of respect for our "covenanted forefathers," but a base and slanderous charge, unsupported even by an attempt at proof, and wholly incapable of proof, preferred against them.

As a sort of offset to this *dis*respect of our author, to the fathers of the church and the "footsteps of the flock," he pretends to have a very high regard for the inspired writers. These he facetiously introduces as the "GRANDFATHERS," and takes occasion at the same time to make quite a brilliant exhibition of his wit in relating an anecdote of a godly old lady and a popish priest. But even for these "GRANDFATHERS" who "were moved by the Holy Ghost," our author does not entertain much more respect than he does for the "fathers;" for he tells us on page eighteen, that "the apostles themselves sometimes misapprehended the words of their divine Master." Now it savours not merely of disrespect but of infidelity, if not of blasphemy, to say that the apostles, while under the infallible guidance of the Spirit of inspiration, could have misrepresented or misapprehended the words of Christ. We need not then be surprised that the "man" who can speak thus of the inspired writers, should show little respect to our "covenanted forefathers," and even reproach and revile them. But it is matter of surprise that such a man should pretend to have a respect for them, and have the effrontery to vilify those who are walking in their footsteps, as if they had departed from them. This is shameful juggling.

On page six, our author asks "why has this question been agitated at all? Is it," he continues "because the first movers are wiser or more faithful than our covenanted forefathers?" Now as the first "agitation" of this subject with which we are acquainted, resulted in the choice of seven deacons, in obedience to the command of men who "spake as they were *moved* by the Holy Ghost," it may be admitted, without any disparagement of the wisdom and faithfulness of our covenanted forefathers, that the "first movers" were wiser and more faithful than they. Yet we do not say that this is the formal *reason* why the subject is agitated now. We rather think that one chief reason is that some of the sons of a covenanted ancestry pretend to a wisdom far superior to that of our fathers, and seem to "be wise" even "above what is written." And on the other hand there are many who think the "first movers" and our "covenanted forefathers" were wiser and more faithful than these their degenerate sons—many who regard the covenanted attainments of the church of God as too sacred to be set aside by the furious, fretful, and

frothy effusions of the Gaileys, the Steeles, the "poor wise men," the M'Kees, the Nightingales—*et id omne genus*—of the present day. Hence the present agitation. But those who sneer at "The Second book of Discipline," and the footsteps of the flock, whether they be "*children*" or *giants* in intellect, will find little favour among honest and godly Covenanters. Their pretended respect for their "covenanted forefathers," while they set at naught their blood-bought attainments, will pass for no more than it is worth. Their cry of "AGITATORS" and "INNOVATORS" will return upon their own heads.

Another favourite object with our author, seems to be, to represent those from whom he differs as ambitious and tyrannical, and himself and his trustee brethren as great sticklers for the rights of the people. For example, on page forty-two, he speaks of the "claims previously put forth" by the author of "the Deacon," as "sufficiently *grasping* to suit the most *ambitious aspirant after power*," and goes on to animadvert on claims still more extravagant. On page forty-one, he speaks of the "officers of the church," in the times of our covenanted forefathers, "lording it over the people" in the matter of managing the temporalities. And on page eighteen he gives some broad hints about the "first workings of that tyrannical system" (the papacy we suppose,) being "a *grasping for power over temporal things*,"—and wonders!! (innocent "man") "that The Deacon has been able to produce so little from this source," in favour of his system. Abuse of this description is altogether unworthy of notice. We merely refer to it as an example of the *kind* and *Christian* spirit of the writer, and of the "high esteem and affectionate regard" he entertains for his "covenanted forefathers." His zeal for the rights of the people is also held up very prominently before his readers. He insists frequently upon the position that "whatever is not official business cannot be usurped by the officers without unjustly infringing upon the rights of the people," and he seems to attach considerable importance to the position he assumes in the very first sentence of his book, namely, that the management of congregational temporalities is *not official* business, and that trustees are not *officers* at all. Odd as this notion is, it is not original with our author. At the last meeting of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian church, a document, written by a learned and distinguished advocate of the trustee system, came under the notice of synod, in which the same position was assumed, and the idea that trustees are *officers*, scouted at as ridiculous and absurd. And yet in this very same document, the learned writer discourses gravely respecting certain powers pertaining to trustees and "their successors in *office*," which he regards as inviolable, or something of that kind. This shows that the assumption is a mere evasion—a contrivance to help its inventors out of a difficulty. But what a pitiful evasion!!

The word "*office*," according to the best lexicographers, signifies a public charge or employment. The business of an office then, or official business, is that which relates to a public charge as opposed to that which is merely private or personal. But the temporal concerns of a congregation being a public charge, their management is of course official business. If it is not, it must be merely personal and private. If, then, the assumption of our author and his learned friend be correct, the temporal concerns of a congregation have nothing of a public nature in them—they are mere private personal affairs—the personal affairs, most likely, of the trustees. Well, this is a phase of trusteeism of a "grasping" tendency

indeed, and yet not far from the truth. Indeed we know some congregations of covenanters where trusteeism is in the ascendency, in which this definition of the system is carried out almost to the letter. We know one in particular, (and it is a pretty fair specimen of most of them,) where such a thing as a congregational meeting is hardly ever heard of —where for several years—six or eight perhaps—no such meeting has been held, except a special one called by the pastor in order to have his salary increased, and perhaps another also special for the election of elders. And if things go on in their usual channel there, the present generation may pass away without an opportunity of witnessing another congregational meeting, unless the session should want an addition to its members, or the pastor a farther increase of his salary. The idea of calling the people together at regular intervals to lay before them a statement of their fiscal concerns would be regarded in that latitude as perfectly preposterous. The members of the congregation generally know nothing of its financial condition.* Now this sort of management can only be accounted for on the principle of this "committee man" and his distinguished friend,—namely, that the management of congregational business is not regarded as official business at all, and the people, of course, have no right to intermeddle with the private business of the trustees.† This is an admirable commentary on the profession of these men who are so clamorous for the "rights of the people." Like our swaggering politicians, they are boisterous for the rights of the people—they would almost die for the rights of the *dear* people. Oh!! how "jealous" even "to a nicety" of the rights of the people. And what holy horror they have of priestly tyranny, and the "grasping claims of ambitious aspirants after power," and of "the officers of the church *lording* it over the people." And with what facility they catch the infidel slang of the age respecting priestcraft, priestly ambition, &c. Oh! dear! but they are the true friends of the people. And yet where their system gets full swing, they take good care to let the *dear* people know precious little of their doings.

Our author proposes to discuss his subject without any reference to "abuses." On page seventeen, he says, "no part of our argument will be drawn from abuses that might be found in consistories or boards of deacons." This is remarkably kind. He is so peculiarly tender he does not wish to expose the frailties of his brethren. But his "goodness is like the morning cloud and early dew," for in writing the next sentence he seems to have forgotten it all, and proclaims the abundance of his materials for that kind of argument, and goes on to tell of a "consistory in the Reformed Presbyterian church that took away the property of the congregation, in spite of a large majority of its members, and sold it for a temple of popish "idolatry." True, he says "he does not use this as an argument at all." As what, then, does he use it? And why so trumpet-tongued about the "abundance" of such materials? Why these attempts to throw odium on his brethren when he admits

* One of the officers, on being asked why they never held congregational meetings, replied that it would never do to hold congregational meetings there; for said he, somebody would get up and oppose *us*, and it would make so much disturbance *we* could get nothing done.

† Since the above was written, we learn with pleasure that several meetings of this congregation have been held. This, however, is easily accounted for when it is known that the principles of trusteeism, so long in the ascendency there, are now rather on the decline; and the friends of deacons have multiplied to such extent that their influence begins to be felt. Hence these congregational meetings. This is exactly what may be expected. Wherever Christ's institutions are duly esteemed, there will the rights of the people be respected.

that he can draw no argument from them? All pure affection, we suppose!! How the "milk of human kindness" gushes through his veins!! But when he referred to these "materials" at all, would it not have been quite as manly to have given them in detail, or at least a few examples, that the reader might judge of their atrocity for himself? We are inclined, however, to the opinion that these "materials" are not quite so abundant as he would have us believe,—because, in the first place, he has given sufficient evidence of his "love to the brethren" to satisfy the most skeptical, that he would not "suffer" such sins upon them without a public rebuke, if they had been really guilty. And, secondly,—because the example he has given is in every particular untrue. We defy him to "point to a consistory in the Reformed Presbyterian church," either the "first formed" or any other, "that took away the property of the congregation in spite of a large majority of its members, and sold it for a temple of popish idolatry." The whole statement is a calumnious fabrication. And it is pretty strong evidence of a remarkable *scarcity* of materials of this kind when the only example adduced is a sheer fabrication. Why risk his veracity in stating that which is false for an example, if he had any thing true to state?

We are well aware, that such unfounded charges against the friends of deacons, are quite abundant in certain quarters. Charges and stories of this kind have been abundant for years, and some of them after a journey of three or four hundred miles, have grown to enormous dimensions. This has hitherto been the regular mode of warfare of the trustee brethren: and by the aid of letter writers, and travelling agents, both male and female, it has been reduced to a system. Out of the abundance of these *arguments* we take the liberty to relate one as a sample, for the entertainment of our readers. Several years ago, it was reported within the bounds of the Pittsburgh Presbytery, that a poor woman, a member of the church in Philadelphia, had been discovered by some of the trustee brethren in great distress;—having neither "food to eat," nor "raiment to put on;"—that application was made immediately to the deacons, but they refused to administer to her relief. The application was repeated again and again without success. Finally, these trustee brethren had to furnish the necessary relief out of their own pockets. In a short time, owing to the neglect of the deacons, the woman died. Application was then made to the deacons to bury her, but they refused, and these same benevolent trustee friends were obliged to nail up the corpse in some sort of rough box, and thus bury her at their own expense. This infamous fabrication was related in the presence of an aged minister of the Reformed Presbyterian church, who remarked that he had many letters from Philadelphia containing statements of other cases quite as bad, if not worse. It was with no small degree of surprise, we found it next to impossible to convince either the person who related the story or the minister who heard it, that it was not true. This shows how skilfully this mode of warfare had been carried on, and to how great a degree of perfection the system had arrived. We doubt not our author has abundance of materials of this description. However dangerous to society are the inventors of such gross and malicious falsehoods, since they appear to be "taken captive by Satan at his will," they should be the objects of our commiseration. "Father, forgive them."

The views of our author respecting the nature of a *divine right*, ap-

pear to us extravagant in the extreme. On pages 3 and 4, speaking of those congregations in the United States that have managed their temporalities for many years by their officers, he says "it was not claimed by them as of divine right, but only preferred to other modes." In proof of this, he quotes a passage from the act of incorporation of the Reformed Presbyterian church in the state of New York (which act he falselv asserts was obtained by Dr. M'Leod,) which provides that the officers "shall not at any time determine or alter the minister's salary or the annual rent of the pews, but that the same shall be always subject to the annual vote of the congregation." This is his proof.

He then assures us, "That it is perfectly plain from the above, that the distinguished divine above alluded to, did not believe that all the temporalities of the church are by divine right to be managed and controlled by the officers; for the right is here reserved to the people to dictate to them both in the amount of the collections and expenditures. And indeed the idea that by divine authority the Deacons are to manage all the temporalities of the church, and to make them dependent upon the congregation both as to what money they shall collect, and what they shall do with it, is an absurdity too glaring to be entertained by any man of common sense who knows any thing of church order."

Now the opinion of Dr. M'Leod in this matter is of very little consequence; and at any rate, as he did not obtain the act of incorporation referred to, no information respecting his opinion can be gathered from it. But to say nothing of the senseless use of the term "dictate," as applied to the people in making their contributions for the support of the gospel, we cannot, with all due respect for our author's logical skill, admit his conclusion. We can see no absurdity at all in the idea that by Divine authority, the officers are to manage the temporalities of the church, and at the same time be dependent on the contributions of the people for the amount to be so managed. We are not of those who suppose, like our author, that the right to manage the contributions of the people is a right to dictate to the people the *amount* of their contributions. Nay, we see, if not the most "glaring absurdity," the most unblushing tyranny in the idea that they who by divine right manage the temporalities may in consequence of that right "dictate" to the people how much they must give, and then apply the amount so extorted to any purpose they please. What! A divine right to manage the temporalities of a congregation is a right to take from the people at pleasure, and a right to spend the amount so taken at pleasure! This is monstrous. And yet our worthy author sets down all who do not believe this as a set of asses destitute of "common sense."

Nor is there any absurdity at all in the idea, that by divine right the deacons are to manage the temporalities, and at the same time be strictly bound to pay the minister's salary as fixed by the vote of the congregation. We find both these ideas clearly asserted in a compend of ecclesiastical government and order published by Synod in 1836. There it is declared, Chap. II. Sec. 2, that "the office of the deacon is to attend to the temporal concerns of the congregation." And in sec. 4, that "to the session, with the deacons associated, belongs the management of the temporalities of the congregation." And in the same chapter, sec. 3, it is also declared, that "to the members of a congregation belong the privileges of —— fixing the salary offered with a call, and of increasing the salary of their pastor." From this it appears that the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church entertains the idea that the ecclesiastical officers have the right to manage the temporalities of the congregation, and at the same time the members of the congrega-

tion have the right to fix the amount their officers are to pay to the pastor. Synod was not so lynx-eyed as to see any inconsistency between these two ideas or any glaring absurdity in either of them. Whether Mr. Nightingale regards the members of this Synod as men of common sense who know any thing of church order, we cannot say, but it is certain they entertain the idea which he has pronounced "an absurdity too glaring to be entertained by men" of that character.

Having been edified by this exhibition of our author's views respecting the nature of a divine right, it may be well enough to make an application of his principles to the trustee system, that we may the better understand what sort of system it is. On pages 10, 11, and 12, he labours to prove the divine right of trustees chiefly from 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4.* According to his definition of a divine right then these trustees cannot be dependent on the congregation for the money they collect, nor accountable to the congregation for the manner in which they dispose of it. Either of these would be a glaring absurdity. Take his whole sentence when speaking of a divine right as applied to deacons, and substitute the word trustees, for whose divine right to manage the temporalities he strenuously contends, and we have the genuine trustee system in all its beauty exhibited to view.

"The idea, that by divine authority the '*trustees*' are to manage all the temporalities of the church, and yet to make them dependent upon the dictation of the congregation both as to what they shall collect and what they shall do with it is an absurdity too glaring to be entertained by any man of common sense who knows any thing of church order."

Here we have trustees with divine authority to manage all the temporalities of the church, including at least those "designed" *partly* if not "solely for the poor," not at all dependent on the will of the people for the amount of funds they wish to have at their disposal—not accountable to any body for the use they make of them. They can *take* as much as they please from the people without their consent, for it is a "glaring absurdity" to make them dependent on the people for the amount they collect; and they can do what they please with it, for it is a glaring absurdity to require them to pay the minister's salary as fixed by the vote of the congregation!!! From all such trustees deliver us. They were bad enough in all conscience when they claimed only human authority, but with a divine right such as John claims for them, we would be afraid of our pockets. And as the title "committee man" which John assumes may be understood to mean a trustee, it is possible he may have a personal interest in the matter. We would therefore most respectfully ask him to keep his distance from us. This we are aware is rather a delicate point, but you must bear with us, John; for really *your* divine authority, if it is what you say, is rather a dangerous commodity.

There are a considerable number of assertions scattered through this work, which, were we disposed to be harsh, we might justly designate falsehoods, and shake in the author's face, the penalty denounced against the breakers of the ninth commandment, Rev. xxi. 9. But we are disposed to be charitable, and notice a few of them under the head of

"SLIGHT MISTAKES," OR BLUNDERS.

I. The first of these we find at the outset, namely, that "it is a *new* principle, that the management of congregational temporalities is official

* The trustees for which he finds a divine right in this passage, had charge, it appears, of funds designed for the poor as well as for other purposes. If his reasoning be sound then, it would prove that trustees and not deacons should have charge of funds designed for the poor.

business belonging to the officers" of the church, and this assertion is repeated in various forms on almost every page of the production.

To prove that this assertion is destitute of truth, it is only necessary to refer to the quotations from Origen, Beza, Henry, Scott, and Guyse, on pages 26 and 27 of "The Deacon," and to those from Rutherford, Dickson, Owen, the London divines, Brown, Ridgley, Gill, and Miller, on pages 35 and 36 of the same work. It is not necessary to copy these extracts as they are accessible to all. They declare as with one voice that the management of the temporalities of the church is the business of church officers, and of course demonstrate the falsehood of our "man's" assertion that the "principle is *new*." He has evidently made large calculations on the ignorance of his readers, not only in relation to "grammatical construction," but historical facts. But notwithstanding this assertion, he almost admits on page 18, that these "great and good men" did entertain the opinion they have expressed. (Very remarkable truly!!) But he says "this being only human testimony the question remains to be argued as much as before." Very true. Their expression of this opinion does not prove it to be true. But it proves his assertion, that it is a "*new* principle," to be false.

But it seems to be with special reference to Covenanters that this assertion is made; for he immediately adds, "We say this claim for official power is new *among Covenanters*." We fear, however, that the assertion will be found as wide of the mark in regard to Covenanters as others. For in addition to the writers referred to above, of whom Rutherford, Dickson and the London Divines were Covenanters, we would refer him to the opinion of Rev. John Fairley, that "the *office*" of deacons "relates to the necessities of the poor, and the *external concerns of the church*."* This esteemed divine seems to have been acquainted with the principle that the care of the external concerns of the church is the business of church officers. This "claim for official power" does not appear to have been "*new*" to him. He speaks of it as a settled matter. "Their office *relates*," &c. Nothing remarkable about the expression. It is merely stated as a thing acknowledged by every body. But while the opinions of Rutherford, Dickson, the London divines and Fairley are more than sufficient to show that this claim is not new among Covenanters, we have still stronger evidence on this point than that of any individuals however respectable. We have the express declaration of the Reformed Presbyterian Church both in Scotland and Ireland. In their Testimony, Chap. XI. Sec. 11, they assert that "Deacons are ordained upon the choice of the congregation, and are *associated* with the teaching and ruling elders in distributing to the necessities of the poor, *and managing other temporalities in the church*." Here we find, not a few individuals, but the whole Covenanted Church claiming for the ecclesiastical officers, the power to manage the other temporalities as well as to take care of the poor. There must surely be some mistake about our author's statement. But if our friend will refer to the second Book of Discipline,—that standing monument of the wisdom and faithfulness of our "covenanted forefathers," for which we confess we "have conceived," if not "an extraordinary" at least a very strong "attachment," he will find it stated in Chap. ix. that "these collections are not only of that which is collected in manner of alms, as some suppose, but of other goods moveable and immoveable, &c."

* Quotation from Stevenson.

This "claim for official power," then, was asserted by those illustrious Covenanters who framed and adopted this venerable document, and by all who have professed their adherence thereto down to the present time. To show that the Reformed Presbyterian church still adheres to this part of her covenanted attainments, if indeed the fact, that it was solemnly ratified and still remains unrepealed on her statute book were not sufficient, we quote the following passage from her Testimony.

"Again, the Presbytery hereby testify and declare their approbation of and adherence unto all the different steps of reformation, that ever in any period were attained unto in this church and land; particularly, besides what has been mentioned above, they declare their adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith, as it was approved by act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, *Anno* 1647; Catechisms larger and shorter; forms of church government, directory of worship, and *books of discipline*, as agreeable to and extracted from the sacred oracles."*

This is surely sufficient to show that our friend is egregiously mistaken when he asserts that "this claim is new among covenanters;" and that "the church in Scotland and Ireland never assumed this power." But aside from this, it is somewhat singular that Mr. Nightingale, who we are credibly informed was a member of the Reformed Presbyterian church in Ireland, and of course solemnly bound to the testimony of which the above extract is a very important item, can write as he does respecting the second book of discipline, and the power of church officers as set forth therein. And what is more curious still—that in the face of all this he should pretend to be a great stickler for the doctrines and practices of "our covenanted forefathers." Had he not been a member of the church in Ireland, his conduct, although not so barefaced, would be no less reprehensible; for the church in the United States distinctly and explicitly "approves of the Testimony of the Reformed Covenanted church in Britain and Ireland."† It would thus seem as if the fathers of the church had taken special pains to guard this matter on every point, that in all future times those who should depart from this important part of our covenanted attainments, should be "known and read of all men," as "covenant-breakers."

But if we go back to the days of Nehemiah, even there we find evidence of our author's mistake. This ancient Covenanter says in reference to the treasurers of the House of God, "Their *office* was to distribute to their brethren." He seems to have thought that the distribution of the treasuries of the church was official business. "Their OFFICE was to distribute, &c." Will John call this claim for official power "*new?*"

But why argue this point, for our author, in the teeth of all his assertions to the contrary, has admitted that the principle he opposes is "old." While he makes this admission, however, he says it has been "exploded." "The old exploded principle." Indeed! When, where, and by whom was it exploded? Do tell us, John? The history of this explosion would certainly be interesting and instructive. And there are some folks so *unreasonable* as to look for proof when assertions of this kind are made, and who in the absence of proof, may be naughty enough to say that you have drawn upon your imagination for your *fact*.

II. On page 22 the following very remarkable passage occurs:

"A very great majority of those whose claims for very high esteem and affectionate regard are felt and acknowledged by every true presbyterian, and whose memory is especially embalmed in the hearts of Covenanters, have not held "the Deacon's" views. Among these are to be found

* Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian church, page 174, Belfast edition, 1832.

† See 6th question of formula put to church officers at their ordination.

the Westminster divines, the ministers of the church of Scotland, and all orthodox Presbyterian Dissenters in Scotland and Ireland for the last 200 years; and though last not least, our *covenanted forefathers*, and all Covenanters down to the present time—who with a very few *modern* exceptions, have all taught and practised upon the principle, that the deacon's power does not extend to all the temporalities of the church."

At the head of this passage stands this judicious and exceedingly appropriate preface, namely, "It is one of the easiest things in the world to make *assertions;* the difficulty is all in *proving them.*" Certainly a more appropriate introduction to the passage above quoted could not be conceived. The assertions here are round and clear, and comprehensive. They are doubtless made with great ease—and by an experienced hand at such business. But where is the proof? Where did our friend obtain all this "interesting information?" How did he ascertain that all this vast multitude held views different from "the Deacon" on the extent of the deacon's power? Who told him that the "Westminster divines, all taught and practised upon the principle that the deacon's power does not extend to all the temporalities of the church?" Who told him that "the ministers of the church of Scotland for the last 200 years all taught and practised upon this principle?" How on earth did he find out, that "*all* orthodox presbyterian dissenters in Scotland and Ireland for the last 200 years, ALL taught and practised upon" this principle so dear to our author? And where does he find that "our *covenanted forefathers,*" too, *all* so taught and practised? In what history or document are all these highly interesting facts recorded? We did certainly expect one quotation or two from some source, to back up these most comprehensive assertions, but we have been disappointed. Not a syllable of proof nor a reference to any sort of authority. We fear there was indeed some "difficulty" here. But notwithstanding this, we hope John will try to tell us where he got all this historical information. And the more especially are we anxious to get a sight of John's history, since every one of the vast multitude referred to, who has expressed an opinion on the subject, agrees with "the Deacon" in every essential particular. Of the thousands of ministers of the church of Scotland, and the hundreds of thousands—the millions of orthodox presbyterian dissenters who have lived and died in Scotland and Ireland during the last 200 years—a very small proportion indeed—hardly a dozen perhaps—have left any record of what particular views they held as to the extent of the deacon's power. And the quotations given by the author of "the Deacon," show that these few held and advocated "the Deacon's" views on this point as far as their writings relate thereto. Our author endeavours to account for this remarkable coincidence of opinion between these respected fathers and his friend, the author of "the Deacon," by saying, that "these opinions being given in answer to a different question, their authors might have given *very different opinions* upon the point now before us," that he will not "appeal to the opinions of men on this question because it has never been discussed to *any* extent in its present aspect"—that when our covenanted forefathers "contended so long and suffered so much" for the right of the Deacon to "collect and distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods," and not merely "that which was collected in manner of alms," they did it merely because they would not "submit to the usurped authority of Erastian civil rulers in this matter."* All this is truly edifying, and from it we learn,

* Pages 17 and 18.

First, That nobody in the world ever expressed an opinion on the point in dispute between our author and his friend, "The Deacon," for "this question has *never* been discussed to *any* extent in its present aspect."

Second, That some "great and good men" *have* expressed opinions on this subject, contrary to the opinions of our author, but these opinions having been expressed in discussions in which the claims of Erastian civil rulers to manage the temporalities of the church are shown to be unfounded, he thinks it unfair to use them in favour of the rights of church officers to the management of this business. These opinions are entirely worthless, for had they known what "ambitious aspirants after power" are our modern Deacon men, "they might have given very different opinions." And,

Third, We learn that all the Westminster divines, all the ministers of the church of Scotland, and all orthodox Presbyterian Dissenters in Scotland and Ireland, for the last 200 years—*all* our *covenanted forefathers*, and *all* covenanters and almost all Christendom besides—have *all* expressed opinions coinciding *exactly* with those of our author upon the point now before us"—for they "have all *taught* and *practised* upon the principle that the deacon's power does not extend to all the temporalities of the church." These are three lessons of great importance which our author has taught us. Let us recapitulate that we may not forget them. 1. Nobody ever expressed an opinion respecting the extent of the deacon's power. 2. Many great and good men have expressed the opinion that his power extends to all the temporalities of the church. 3. Almost every body great and small who has borne the Presbyterian name for 200 years past has expressed the opinion that the deacon's power does *not* extend to all the temporalities of the church. Who can doubt our author's fitness to discuss this question?

It is scarcely necessary here to remark, that the vast majority of those here claimed as holding our author's views, have left no record of their individual opinions on this subject, or indeed on any subject;—and hence his claim that they were all on his side is too ridiculous to deserve any serious notice.

It is freely admitted, however, that the practice of some of them has not come fully up to their profession, inasmuch as the office of the deacon has been extensively neglected; yet the principle, that the management of the temporalities of the church belongs to the officers, has been very generally acted upon by the vast multitude referred to. In the Church of Scotland they never had a trustee. The pastor and ruling elders manage the temporalities. So also to a considerable extent among the Presbyterians in Ireland. This has been the general practice, and the instances where trustees are found, are only the exceptions. But it is a bad mode of argument to take the *practice* of a small portion of any denomination of people as an index of the doctrines held and taught by the body. One grand design of ecclesiastical law, is to correct loose practices, but loose practices can never determine the law. About the time our New Light brethren left the church, it was no uncommon thing to hear them argue that, as individuals in the church had been in the habit of voting and sitting on juries for many years, therefore the doctrines and laws of the church could not be opposed to such practices. But every one knows that the toleration of these immoral practices arose from a laxity of discipline, and not from any thing favourable thereto in

the standards of the church. It might with equal plausibility be argued that the church has not condemned and prohibited "the soul-destroying traffic in intoxicating drinks," because some of her members have been engaged in this traffic ever since it was prohibited, and still obstinately and unblushingly persist in it in open *defiance* of the authority of the church. The fact then, that some congregations in the churches referred to may have had trustees, is no argument that any of them ever held or taught the doctrine that the management of the temporalities does not belong to the officers, especially while their acknowledged standards teach the contrary. The great body of those referred to, especially the Church of Scotland, are explicitly bound to the second Book of Discipline, which is very decided on this point.

III. Another mistake, or rather misrepresentation, of our author is, that the author of "The Deacon" holds that the radical principle of the trustee system is, that trustees are not officers, pages 10 and 12.

Now we beg leave to say that the author of the Deacon has nowhere maintained any such thing. He has indeed said very truly, that "the radical principle of the trustee system is that trustees are not *church* officers, but he has nowhere put forth the ridiculous idea that they are not officers at all." This idea is the creation of John's own fancy; and the idea that the author of the Deacon had expressed such an absurdity, is "traceable only to the same source." He then charges the author of the Deacon with arguing against trustees as *officers*, when the radical principle of the system is that they are not, and informs his readers with profound gravity that "there is no such thing in the church as unordained officers." That those who attend to the business of a public charge are *not officers*, and their business in attending thereto, *not official* business, is a sage discovery for which we are wholly indebted to the champions of modern trusteeism. While no man ever believed that trustees are ecclesiastical officers, certainly no one ever before supposed that they are not officers at all. There is a difference, John, between being merely an officer, and being an ecclesiastical officer; and so long as there are trustees in the church, there is (to use your own grammatical construction,) "such thing as *unordained officers*," in it, your assertion to the contrary notwithstanding.

The use which our friend makes of this misrepresentation requires some farther notice. The author of the Deacon, in noticing the attempt sometimes made to establish the office of trustee from 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4, had said that the "mere carrying of funds does not constitute an office." Our author jumps at this expression with great avidity, as if he had found something exactly to suit him. He "perfectly agrees with him that it is absurd to say that the mere carrying of funds, constitutes an office;" and goes on, with a slight inclination to be witty in his way, to remind the author of 'the Deacon,' of his admission that "trustees are no church officers." His argument, although not very clearly stated, seems to be this, that as the carrying of funds does not constitute an office, and as trustees are not church officers, therefore the persons whom Paul sent to carry the liberality of the Corinthians to Jerusalem were trustees. If this is not his idea, we confess we do not understand him. This argument, or rather we should say this sophism, for the conclusion would not follow were both the propositions true, is founded on the assumption that trustees are not officers—a position that neither "the Deacon," nor any other sensible man ever admitted. He uniformly misrepre-

sents "the Deacon," on this point. The Deacon having said that trustees are not *church* officers, our author constantly assumes that he has admitted that they are not officers at all. Keeping this in view, the silliness of his retort upon "the Deacon," is abundantly evident. But independent of this, since the mere carrying of funds from one city to another is not the business for which trustees are appointed, it does not follow that the persons who may be employed to carry them are trustees—If so, the carriers of the United States mail are congregational trustees, for they frequently carry church funds from one city and place to another. Our author, then, only manifests his stupidity, or else his propensity to misrepresent, and leaves the objection of the Deacon exactly as he found it—if not unanswerable—unanswered.

IV. A fourth misrepresentation or mistake which deserves notice is immediately connected with the preceding. The author of "the Deacon," in exposing this perversion of the texts alluded to, had said that if they "prove any thing on the subject at all, they prove too much even for the advocates of the trustee system; namely, that the people have a right to appoint trustees for the poor's fund, and thus banish Deacons altogether." Now, says our author, "to ward off this fatal objection, it is only necessary to place it in juxtaposition with 'the Deacon's' statement, that these "funds were not designed solely to *feed the poor.*" Now if our man can place nothing else in "juxtaposition," with this objection with which to "ward it off," we fear its effects will still prove fatal to his favourite system. If these funds were not designed *solely* for the poor, they must have been *partly* so designed. It would be absurd to talk of funds not designed *solely* for a certain purpose, if *no part* of them was designed for that purpose. A part of these funds then being designed for the poor the objection of "the Deacon" remains untouched. The principle involved is the same, whether they carried a large or a small amount. If they carried funds for other purposes also, that has nothing to do with the objection. The misrepresentation consists in assuming, that "the Deacon" had granted that *no part* of these funds were for the poor. If then the carrying of funds designed for ecclesiastical purposes from one place to another, authorizes the appointment of trustees for the management of congregational funds—the carrying of funds designed for the poor, authorizes the appointment of trustees for the management of the poor's fund. This seems to be incontrovertible. It is one thing, John, to make a reply to an argument, but quite another thing to answer it.

V. We now come to a passage of very grave and solemn import. That we may have it fairly before us, we quote the whole connexion.

In the third place. The question is not, as "The *Deacon*" has stated, whether—

"The funds invested in the place of worship, and those which go to the maintenance of the ministry, and other charges attendant upon the enjoyment and propagation of the gospel, are a mere *joint-stock concern*, and differing from the property invested in a bank or a road only in the circumstance, that the revenue anticipated in the one case consists in dollars, in the other in religious and moral improvement. That there is no dedication of property in the one case more than in the other."

And he farther says, that—

"It is difficult, indeed, to believe that any devout mind can contemplate, without revolting at it, this doctrine as thus stated in its naked deformity. Yet it is certainly the fact, that this statement embraces the essential principle of the trustee system."*

Now, were this only a reference to an abuse of the system of congregations

* Page 47.

managing their temporalities by committees, or trustees, it would not be worthy of notice ; but as it is asserted, that it "is certainly the fact, that this statement embraces the essential principle of the trustee system," it is consequently intended to apply to every congregation, without any exception, where the finances have been managed by trustees or committee-men ; for no system can exist without its *essential* principle. It therefore becomes absolutely necessary that some notice should be taken of it. We will, however, take no more notice of it than it deserves, which is to indignantly pronounce it a *slander* upon every congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the finances of which have been managed in this way, in all the past ages of her history. Ay, and we will hold him to it, until he produces *one* single instance where and when the principle has either been taught or practised upon, that church property can "be sold and distributed for the individual benefit of the members of the church, or the pew-holders ;" or "the revenues appropriated to the private uses of the members of the congregation ;" "or, in case of removal, that any contributor might demand an assessment and receive his share." And when, "on the other hand, immigrants have attached themselves to the church, or individuals made a profession of religion in a particular church ;" and it has been denied that "they become entitled to the benefits of the church property ;" and moreover, when and where it has been denied, "that the poor have a real and true joint-interest in the ecclesiastical goods, as well as the rich." These particulars are all taken from "The *Deacon*," page 48, because they are given as distinctive of his system, in opposition to that which he describes as "the essential principle of the trustee system." And we repeat it, that if he cannot show where and when a congregation of Covenanters has offended in *all* or *any* of the above particulars, he must stand convicted of publishing a *slander* upon his brethren. And it is difficult indeed to believe, that any devout mind can contemplate, without revolting at it, this statement, thus exhibited in its naked deformity, unless he be entirely ignorant of the practice of the church in this matter, or has entirely forgotten that the ninth commandment has yet a place in the decalogue.*

What a perfect thundergust of indignation we have here! John has indignantly pronounced "the Deacon" a slanderer!! This is truly awful! Ay, and he "will hold him to it." Yes, hold him to it, John. That's the way to fix him. And he "repeats it" too. Yes, John, repeat it—drive it right into him—tell him about the ninth commandment, and the tenth, and the seventh and the whole decalogue. Don't spare him. Had our worthy friend been as poetically inclined as his learned and illustrious predecessor, Rev. C. B. M'Kee, we would have expected this bluster to be adorned with some such quotation as this:

> "Winds tempestuous mighty resounding,
> Thick mingled confusion the mountainous roll,
> Shores wide whelmed, waves bursting, bulged navies high bounding,
> Or deep plunged in gulfs yawning that stagger the soul."

And is it any wonder that his "spirit is stirred within him," when his dearest friends are so shamefully slandered? For if he adopts the principle that "the greater the truth the greater the slander," we confess he has good reason to be wrathy.

But let us dissect this passage a little. And first, Who has "The Deacon" slandered? John says, "every congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the finances of which have been managed in this way," (that is, by trustees,) "in all the past ages of her history." Has he? Well, John, how many congregations, think you, have managed their finances by trustees in all the past ages of the church's history? How many? Is there *one?* If there is, name it. We do not believe there is a single congregation in the Reformed Presbyterian church, which has had even an existence in all the past ages of her history, much less one whose finances have been managed by trustees during all that period. We might here leave the charge of this indignant pro-

* Pages 12, 13, 14.

nouncer of slander, inasmuch as there is no such congregation as he describes in existence, and of course nobody is slandered. This blast, then, is merely our author's way of showing his great "personal respect" for "The Deacon." But second, there are some congregations whose finances are now managed by trustees. Has "The Deacon" slandered them? If so, in what does the slander consist? Why, he has said that ecclesiastical property, according to the trustee system, differs from property invested in a bank only in the different kind of revenue anticipated. And is not this true? Have not the trustees of church property the same legal privileges and powers as the trustees of any other property? If John can show any other difference than that stated by "the Deacon," then we will admit, not that he has slandered any body, but that he has given an erroneous view of the trustee system. We wish to be distinctly understood. We are aware that there are particular charters in which the powers of trustees are variously limited. Many of them embrace principles not at all essential to the system. So also with the charters of banks. We do not refer to these. But on the general principle of the trustee system as it exists in any state of the union, we challenge him to show any other difference between the property invested in a bank or a rail-road, and the property of a congregation. But he has also said that "there is no dedication of property in the one case more than in the other." And is not this also true? If the property is dedicated to the Head of the church, ought not His officers to take care of it? Our author, on page six, seems horrified at the idea of Christ's officers having either "original or appellate jurisdiction," in any thing respecting church property. Of course, then, he cannot, without self-stultification regard it as dedicated. Where then is the slander? Where? What a pity, John, you could not find something more substantial to vent your indignation upon.

But "The Deacon" has said that "this statement embraces the essential principle of the trustee system." What statement? Not exactly the statement embraced in the quotation, as our author falsely asserts. For he commences his quotation in the middle of the statement referred to by "The Deacon." The quotation indeed embraces one or two inferences from the principle of the system, the statement of which principle ends just where the quotation begins. This principle as stated by "The Deacon" is "that trustees are not church officers, acting in the name of the church's Head—but the mere agents of the people." To this principle our author has repeatedly given his assent. Why then cry out slanderer at "The Deacon"—and why suppress this essential part of his statement? By the way, there is something peculiarly ludicrous in the mode of introducing this quotation and some others. John evidently designs in this way to make the Deacon's statement appear ridiculous. Hence he picks out two or three detached sentences about the forty-seventh or forty-eighth page, near the end of the pamphlet, and parades these forth as "The Deacon's" statement of the question to be discussed. Then, to give it the semblance of such statement, he places the word "*whether*" immediately before, which gives it a most awkward and disjointed appearance, since there is nothing in the passage from beginning to end to answer his "*whether*."

John denies, that on the trustee principle, church property "can be

sold and distributed for the individual benefit of the members of the church." Now whether 'The Deacon' has asserted this, or not, it is certainly true. Is not the property the people's? Can they not do what they will with their own? What is to prevent them from distributing it for their individual benefit? Church officers and courts have no original or appellate jurisdiction in such matters, says John. Surely then the people can distribute it if they please. Ah, but John says 'The Deacon' must produce an instance where this has been done, for he says "no system can exist without its essential principle." True, no system can exist independent of the principle essential to its existence, but yet a system may exist and some of its essential principles never be carried into practice. For example, the right to sell property is a principle essential to the complete ownership of property, and yet there are multitudes of men, owners of property, who have never sold it. Indeed whenever this essential principle is carried into practice the ownership ceases. It is clearly absurd then, to say, that the right of trustees to sell property does not exist, unless they have actually sold it. It is one thing then to say that by the trustee system property can be disposed of in certain ways, and quite another, to say that in every or any given case it has been so disposed of. Trustees *can* "appropriate the revenues to the private uses of the members," if they please. They *can* grant to "any contributor his share," and they *can* deny to the poor, and to strangers, a joint interest in the property if it suits them.

All "these particulars," which he has "taken from 'The Deacon' page forty-eight," they can do, according to the principle of the trustee system, which John so devoutly defends. For certainly if his book has any meaning at all, it is that congregations in their congregational capacity, (by which he means trustees,) have the whole management and control of their temporalities independent of all church courts. If he shrinks from 'The Deacon's' inference, it must be because he has not the hardihood to defend the principle in its legitimate results. That the principle of the system has not often been fully carried out into practice, is owing to the restraints of Christian principle, and not to any thing in the system itself. It is, to say the least, perfectly childish in the 'man' to call upon the Deacon for instances, where this principle has been fully carried out, since he has himself admitted and defended the principle.*

And he knows very well that the most revolting features of every bad system are always kept in the back ground until a good opportunity offers for making them tell to advantage. It is a matter of thankfulness, however, that circumstances have occurred which have brought to light so many of the abominations of this system, in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, that no man of intelligence will risk his reputation in defending it.

VI. Another of our author's mistakes is found near the foot of page fourteen. He says,

"We have no dispute with 'The Deacon' about the perpetuity of

*Had the man been disposed to reason fairly, it would have been his business to show that the deductions of the author of the Deacon are not legitimate. But when he admits the principle, it is perfectly silly for him to ask for instances, where it has been fully carried out in every particular. And even if examples were given, our author has made provision to meet them all, by telling us, as he has done, that they are all "abuses" of the trustee system, and he has not "one word of apology for any abuses that may be found" in it.

this office. We believe that it is perpetual, and may be recalled at any time, when the circumstances of the church require it."

We wonder if the man did not laugh at this sentence after he had written it out. He believes "that it is *perpetual*, and may be *recalled* when circumstances require it." So that which is perpetual may *occasionally* come to an end, and then have another beginning or not, according to circumstances. That's rather a circumstantial perpetuity, John. It reminds us forcibly of a sermon we once heard on the nature of the deacon's office, in which the preacher announced with devout gravity, as subdivisions of his discourse,

1st. That the office is *perpetual*, and

2nd. That it is *contingent*. This would make the deacon a contingent perpetuity, or rather a perpetual contingency. Our profound author makes him a circumstantial perpetuity, or a perpetual circumstance, just as we choose to take it. We had an idea that that which is perpetual is uninterrupted, and of course does not cease, and that any thing which ceases for a time, and may never again be called into existence, is not perpetual. An ordinary and perpetual office, is an office always existing under all circumstances. On the contrary, an extraordinary and occasional or circumstantial office, is an office that exists occasionally as circumstances seem to require. If men allow a perpetual office to cease, it is their sin, but this does not change the nature of the office as instituted by the Head of the church. The fact that it is perpetual shows that it ought never to cease.*

VII. In the commencement of his third chapter, our learned author falls into more than one of his "slight mistakes." After amusing his readers with the spice of his usual pleasant and pious play on the word "pioneer," he quotes a sentence or two from "the Deacon," respecting the Westminster form of church government. In this quotation it is affirmed, that while this document speaks of a *special* business pertaining to the office of deacon, it does not affirm that to be his *only* business. At this he raves and blusters in a manner which clearly indicates his inability to meet 'the Deacon' on this point, even by a plausible sophism. At last he says, in a peculiarly comical style, page 39:

"But there is a slight mistake in 'the Deacon's' statement, namely, that it is contrary to matter of fact."

"The Westminster divines do not say that the deacon 'has a special business.'

* On page 16, John makes an amusing exhibition of his knowledge of arithmetic. He refers to some facts in the history of Covenanters, which had been stated by the author of 'the Deacon,' showing the manner in which the office of deacon came to be neglected among them. He then very sagely remarks, that this neglect "is agreeable to scripture," inasmuch as there was an "*occasion*" for the original institution of the office. So it would seem that, had there been *no occasion* for the institution of the office, it would be contrary to scripture now to neglect it. Fine reasoning, truly!! But he says farther, that this "neglect is also agreeable to our form of church government, because it is there said that the number of each of the officers is to be proportioned according to the *condition* of the congregation." Now as the "number of each of the officers" is just *one* and can be no more,—for each officer is just *one* officer,—it is hardly necessary to say that the Westminster divines use no such ridiculous language. After enumerating the different *kinds* of officers, they say, "the number of each of which is to be proportioned, &c." We do not suppose he means to misquote, but whether or not, the misrepresentation is equally ridiculous. Here, then, our author gravely quotes a passage declaring that the number of each kind of officers is to be proportioned to the condition of the congregation, to prove that one kind may be dispensed with altogether!! How the *number* of deacons can be in proportion to the *condition* of the congregation, where there are no deacons at all, is a mystery above our comprehension. According to our ideas, if the *number* and the *condition* are to be in proportion where there is no number, there is no condition, and of course no congregation. John's arithmetic seems to be as peculiar as his grammar.

They say that he is 'to take special care in distributing to the necessities of the poor.' And again, 'to take special care for the relief of the poor.' And it is perfectly plain that the word *special* does not apply to the business of the deacon at all, but to the care with which he is to attend to that business."

Now if 'the Deacon' made a 'slight mistake' in not attending to the very nice distinction between a "care of the poor," and a "care for the relief of the poor," we fear our author has made more than one "slight mistake" in these *learned* criticisms. And,

1st. He is entirely mistaken in supposing that his discovery of the relation of the word *special,* even if correct, invalidates in any degree the declaration of 'the Deacon,' that the Westminster divines do not affirm the relief of the poor to be the *only* business of the deacon. This mistake doubtless arises from his ignorance of "correct grammatical construction," for it is perfectly evident that when the Westminster divines say, it "*belongs*" to the deacon's office to "take *special care* in distributing to the necessities of the poor," and it "*belongs*" to his office to take *special care* for the relief of the poor, a general or common care in distributing to the necessities of others is implied; so that whether we apply the word *special* to the care of the poor, or to the care with which the deacon is to take care of the poor, as the "man" will have it, it implies in either case a care for something else. Here, by the way, we see the impropriety of those who do not understand "correct grammatical construction," attempting publicly to discuss controverted questions, a clear understanding of which necessarily requires correct knowledge of such construction. A *special* care for one thing necessarily presupposes a *care* for other things. A *special* care for the relief of the poor, presupposes a care for the relief of others. A *special* care in distributing to the necessities of the poor, presupposes a care in distributing to the necessities of others. Our worthy friend's mistake arises, no doubt, from his confessed ignorance of "correct grammatical construction."

2. Another mistake our author makes in these criticisms is his assumption that church government is exhibited *in detail* in the Westminster formulary; and that church officers and members have no powers but those which are therein specified. This is a gross mistake, for the third term of communion declares that the form of church government is therein "*for substance,* justly exhibited." *For substance,* not in detail. Hence in relation to the office of ruling elder, it is merely said that he is "to join with the minister in the government of the church," and "to join in government," without any specifications in detail. We are not therefore to infer that ruling elders have not duties to perform severally as well as jointly. That they are not bound to visit the sick, pray with them, exhort, reprove and rebuke, and watch over, with all diligence the flock of which they have the oversight. That they are not to distribute the elements at the Lord's supper nor to attend upon the higher judicatories of the church. Hence also in speaking of particular congregations it is said that the members are to "meet in one assembly for public worship" without any detail of the other affairs and duties of a congregation. The assumption of our author then is not merely a slight but a very gross mistake—not only contrary to the matter of fact, but so palpably contrary thereto that it is hard to believe he is so ignorant as not to know it. But ignorance of grammatical construction will lead to very glaring mistakes.

VIII. On page forty our author makes a very awkward blunder. He

says that "in the act of the General Assembly of the church of Scotland approving of the (Westminster) form of government, there is ample evidence that the confining of the deacon's office to the 'care of the poor' received their hearty concurrence." Now the blunder consists in this, that this form of government *does not confine* the deacon's office to the care of the poor at all, and of course the act adopting it can give no evidence that the church of Scotland heartily concurred in such confinement. The form of government prohibits the deacon from preaching the word and administering the sacraments, and the adopting act shows that the church of Scotland heartily concurred in these prohibitions. But it nowhere prohibits him from the management of the temporalities of the church. On the contrary it gives one specification of his power to manage these temporalities in distributing a portion of them to the poor, showing his general power by a particular application,—just as our Saviour teaches the doctrine of a general superintending providence by pointing to the fowls of the air,—the lilies of the field—and the hairs of our heads. And as the church of Scotland heartily concurs in all this, of course it concurs in the *non*-prohibition of the deacon from the management of the temporalities generally. This looks very much like a wilful mistake in our author.

IX. Another mistake worthy of notice occurs on page twenty-three. He says the author of the Deacon "knows that only a few months before the publication of his Essay, the very synod of which he is a member declared that 'the exercise of the Deacon's office does not extend to all the temporalities of the church.'"

Now our worthy friend's mistake here consists in this, that there is no truth in his statement. No resolution of any kind on the subject of the deacon's power was passed by synod at the time referred to, and no such declaration was ever made by synod at any time. It is therefore impossible that the author of the Deacon could "know" any such thing. A preamble and resolution on the subject of deacons was indeed offered at that meeting by a very amiable and reverend father, merely for the sake of peace, but it was not passed; for even the venerable and peaceful mover, after he succeeded in producing no small degree of "dissension and disputation," voted against his own motion. We do not call our author's mistake a breach of the ninth commandment, but we leave every one to call it by such name as he may think fit.

X. There are a few characteristic blunders in his appendix, which deserve a passing notice, and with these we close our remarks in relation to such matters. To notice them all would be entirely out of the question. He admits the truth of the declaration of synod that "our covenanted uniformity does not recognise as of divine right the congregational *trustee*." But he asks, "Will any person maintain that every thing that is not recognised in our covenanted uniformity must be rejected by the church?" Yes, John, we will maintain this. For our covenanted uniformity recognises every thing taught in the *word of God*. We do not stop to prove this, for it is evident to any one who can read the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms—the form of government—the covenants—or the Directories for worship. We will therefore take this for granted until it is denied—and we trust no 'man' professing to be a covenanter will have the hardihood to deny that it recognises every principle taught in the Bible. If then the congregational trustee can be fairly deduced from scripture, our covenanted uni-

formity recognises him. But synod has declared that our covenanted uniformity does not recognise him. The conclusion then is irresistible that the scriptures recognise no such personage. Thus falls the whole cobweb which John has taken so much pains to weave. The admission of this fact was a sad blunder, John.

Our author says farther, that the election of church officers by the people is not recognised in our covenanted uniformity. Another mistake, John. This is a scriptural principle and a scriptural practice, and of course recognised in our covenanted uniformity. But if John will look at the first article of the solemn league and covenant, he will find that the "*preservation* of the reformed religion in the church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, *discipline* and government," is a very prominent part of our covenanted uniformity. And by referring to her Books of Discipline, he will find that election to office by the consent or will of the congregation is a doctrine very clearly taught there, and the contrary doctrine explicitly condemned. Our covenanted uniformity then explicitly recognises this principle.* Again, he says "The synod, if forced to come to a vote on that question, would undoubtedly decide that the choice of officers by the people is not recognised in our covenanted uniformity. How do you know, John? Perhaps if synod was *forced* to vote as you wish, they might so vote—but we are confident that under no constraint short of absolute force would they vote such an untruth—nor do we believe they could be even forced to such a vote. These are very bad blunders, John.

Our author seems rather puzzled to know how to dispose of the declaration of Synod respecting the power of a consistory by divine right for consultation or advice for the well ordering of the temporal affairs of the congregation. He says, "If consistories have no power except for consultation or advice, they have just no *official* power at all." We confess we cannot see how it is, or why it is, that they cannot hold *official* consultations, and either give or receive *official* advice. And we are inclined to think that even if their power ended with the "consultation," it might possibly be *official* power still. But although John makes it end there, Synod seems to have carried it a little farther. The declaration of synod is, that they have power by divine right to carry out the result of their consultations into action, namely, "the well ordering of the temporal affairs of the congregation." They have not merely power to consult, but to order well the congregational temporalities; and that this end may be the better attained, they have this power to deliberate or consult together like any other deliberative body.

His representation of this act of Synod as relating merely to "a right to give a good advice, which belongs to every individual of the human family," certainly shows great respect for the supreme judicatory of the church. We are not partial to the mode of expression used by Synod? We think the language of the form of government itself, namely, that the officers shall meet together "for the well ordering of the affairs of the congregation," more clear and definite than that of Synod; and we are not sure but that the new phrase "consultation or advice" rather darkens the language of the standards. But to torture their language into mere childish nonsense would certainly be unbecoming in any member of the church except our 'man,' and it is (if such a thing were possible) almost too contemptible even for him.

* If any thing in the form of government seems to contradict this principle, it is carefully guarded against in the adopting act.

He tells us also that "it must be the congregation" the officers are to advise. He must have forgotten that at the time this declaration was made by Synod, the world had not been enlightened by his book, and very likely the members of Synod may not have been acquainted with the doctrine he elucidates so clearly, that the management of congregational temporalities belongs to "congregations in their congregational capacity." He is rather hasty in supposing they meant to corroborate this notion of his. And it is possible as they may have been inclined to the opinion of the Westminster divines, that the *officers* are to meet together for the well ordering of the temporal affairs of the congregation, they may have entertained the idea that they would consult and advise, not with the congregation, but with *each other* in regard to these affairs.

But this trick of twisting, torturing, and misrepresenting the language of Synod has been practised so long by the trustee brethren that it has become a habit with them,* and John has rather betrayed his friends by undue haste this time. For it is well known that the whole trustee party contended to the very last in Synod against this part of the resolution. And although the phrase "consultation or advice" may have been introduced in order to make the resolution more palatable to this party, yet they opposed it as strenuously as they could have opposed it, had it been framed in the very language of the standards where this softening phrase is not found. And after all this, our 'man,' and it may be a few others, pretend that this resolution exactly accords with their views. Such chicanery would be a disgrace to men of common honesty, to say nothing of Christianity.

* To give some idea of the tricks resorted to, in order to make the impression that the action of Synod has always been in favour of the trustee system, we relate one as a sample. At the meeting of Synod in 1838 a complaint was presented by the trustee party of the Philadelphia congregation against the session of that congregation, for having ordained deacons and established a consistory for the management of their temporalities. This complaint was referred to the committee on discipline of which Rev. T. Sproull was chairman. This committee, aware, no doubt, that synod would not sanction a report either condemning a consistory or the action of the Philadelphia session in the case, brought in a report purely non-committal—neither approving nor condemning any thing, but merely saying they had nothing to recommend. Synod, however, amended this report by adding an expression of their hope that *all* the Philadelphia congregation would acquiesce in the order established among them, which had been the subject of complaint. Mr. Sproull and his little party voted against this amendment. There the matter seemed to rest. At the meeting of Synod in 1845, however, several papers on the subject of deacons came up from the Pittsburgh and Allegheny congregation. In one of these, written by the Pastor, Rev. Mr. Sproull, this very resolution of Synod in 1838 is claimed as favouring the trustee system. And that he may enjoy the privilege of explaining it to suit his purpose, he boldly avows himself to be its author. The object of this avowal evidently was under pretence of authorship to explain away the obvious meaning of the resolution. The history of the transaction however was well recollected by others, but especially by Rev. J. M. Willson, who had been deeply interested in that report. He denied that Mr. Sproull was the author of the clause which expressed the hope that all would acquiesce in the consistory. He said the report brought in by Mr. Sproull was quite different from the resolution adopted,—that part of it had been rejected by Synod, and the phrase in question proposed by himself (Mr. W.) and inserted on his motion, Mr. Sproull and some of his friends voting against it. Mr. Sproull again and again asserted that he was the author of that clause. He was absolutely positive. He knew he could not be mistaken, for he distinctly recollected writing it in committee at the suggestion of Mr. Roney. After a good many assertions on the part of Mr. S., and denials on the part of Mr. Willson, the latter presented the original paper with the report of the committee in Mr. Sproull's handwriting, and the amendment proposed by himself and adopted by Synod, added in his own handwriting, which Mr. S. so distinctly recollected having written himself. This is a fair specimen of the way in which the action of Synod has been tortured to serve the purposes of these trustee brethren. We would be sorry to charge Mr. S. with wilful misrepresentation. For however difficult it is to believe that he could have had a distinct recollection of a transaction that never took place, we have little doubt that he had actually wrought himself up to believe what he stated. We know there is not a more amiable man living than Mr. S., but his mind is so warped on this subject and his prejudices so deep-rooted, having so far committed himself, that his doings and sayings in relation to it are entirely unlike himself.

We come now to notice briefly our author's

ARGUMENTS.

Here we have a word to say about his statement of the question. He furnishes his readers with some eight or ten pages of very entertaining discourse—quoting a great number of scraps of sentences from "the Deacon," most of them found towards the end of that work—and telling us that this, that, and the other is *not* the question. Now were it true that the author of 'The Deacon' stated all the points our friend has scraped together, as points to be discussed, which it is not—and had he proceeded to the discussion of every one of them, we do not see that he should be blamed for not knowing what particular points our author meant to oppose. He seems to think that 'the Deacon' should say nothing with which he is agreed, and to be really wrathy because he has inculcated some doctrines, to which he cannot take exceptions. And these he calls mis-statements of the question. We trust, when the author of the Deacon writes another book, he will consult Mr. Nightingale, so that he may teach nothing that he will not feel free to oppose. This will be some comfort to our friend.

After our author gets down to the fifth place in his statement of the question, he says, page 16,

"The question is not whether the Deacons have power *about* the temporalities of the Church. The affirmative of this is admitted, (for the supplies for the poor are temporalities,) but how much power have they? Or, when simply stated, the question for discussion seems to be this—*Has the Head of the Church committed the management of all her temporal concerns to the officers, or left a part of them to be managed by the body of the faithful?*"

Now this statement of the question is self-contradictory and absurd. First, it admits that Deacons have power about the temporalities of the church, and afterwards states in other words, that the real question is whether they have this power. You know, John, that "the whole is equal to its parts," and of course the parts are equal to the whole. You know too that the temporalities of the church consist of funds for the relief of the poor, and funds for other ecclesiastical purposes. You cannot deny this, John. Whoever then has power about the temporalities of the church, has power about that of which these temporalities consist —the parts being equal to the whole, and the whole to its parts. The Deacons then having power about the temporalities of the church, have power about funds for the poor, and for other ecclesiastical purposes. This reasoning may be stated syllogistically, thus:—

The temporalities of the church are—funds for the poor and for other ecclesiastical purposes.

But Deacons have power about the temporalities of the church.

Therefore Deacons have power about the funds of the poor, and for other ecclesiastical purposes.

Now, after this admission, it is a perfect farce to state as the question to be discussed, whether the officers have the management of all the temporal concerns of the church, or only a part of them. The question, "how much power have they?" thrown in, in the middle of the paragraph, is so foreign to the true issue, that the "man" jumps away from it at once himself.

The real point on which John is at issue with the author of "the Deacon" is, *whether the officers have power about the temporalities*

of the church, as asserted in our testimony, or only about a part of these temporalities. And had it not been that he wished to *seem* in favour of the standards of the church, while in reality opposed to them, he would have stated it in some such language as this. For we are very sure our author and all his party would gladly see that declaration by which he has stultified himself, for ever expunged from our testimony. And that other little paragraph in the form of government which says that pastor, elders, and deacons, are "to meet together for the well ordering of the affairs of the congregation," they could also very conveniently dispense with.

So far as we are concerned, however, we do not object to his statement of the question. The contradictions with which he has clogged it, injure nobody but himself. In order to get fairly at his arguments we have next to turn over to page twenty-four, where we find another statement of the question, in the following words:

"The only point of dispute between 'The *Deacon*' and ourselves is, whether or not the Deacon's power extends to all the temporalities of the Church; or, to narrow it down still farther, it is, whether or not his assertion be *true* that "the *entire fund* formed by contributions for ecclesiastical purposes, was at first managed by the Apostles, and by them transferred to the Deacons."* For this alleged fact is the very foundation of his system; and we freely admit, that if it be true, it is a scriptural one; but if, on the contrary, we can demonstrate that this assertion is *not true*, then his foundation will be removed, and, as a natural consequence, all that has been built upon it will fall to the ground."

Here we wish the reader to note the admission, that if the *entire fund* for ecclesiastical purposes was at first managed by the apostles, and by them transferred to the Deacons, then it follows that the system advocated by the author of "The Deacon" is a scriptural system. On this single point, according to his own admission, the whole controversy turns. Let this be borne in mind as we proceed.

Then he gives us the position he means to defend—which makes his fourth or fifth mode of stating the question. It is this:

"We take the position that the apostles did *not manage* that *fund*, nor *assume* any *control* over *it*, and consequently did not *transfer* it to the *deacons*, but left it by the will of the Church's Head to be managed by the *body of the faithful* in their social congregated capacity."

Here then we have at last a plain position, and we take it as he is pleased to present it. On this we join issue. How does he support his position? Why, his first *argument* is in these words:—

"First, *it is impossible*, from the very nature of the *apostles' duties*, that they *could* have managed this fund."

This strikes us like proving one assertion by making another. We admit indeed that if the thing was impossible, then it was not done. But why was it impossible? Because "daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." Then it was impossible that any of them that believed could have managed this fund, for "all that believed—continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house."—Acts ii. 44, 46. If this proves an impossibility in the one case, so it does in the other, and John's theory falls to the ground, and indeed the whole business would fall through, for nobody could attend to it. This attention to teaching and preaching, however, was by no means inconsistent with their ma-

* Page 26.

nagement of this fund, for Paul says in regard to his stay at Ephesus, "that by the space of three years he *ceased not* to warn every one night and day."—Acts xx. 31. And yet in verse 34 he declares that during this period his own hands had ministered to his own necessities, and the necessities of them that were with him. So that this "not ceasing" to teach, or preach, or warn, is perfectly consistent with a very considerable degree of attention to secular affairs. And when the apostles say, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word," whether they mean exclusive attention or not, is of no consequence as regards our author's assertion. For they speak respecting "the future"—what they *will* do when the Deacons are appointed—but nothing of what they had done previously. If any inference respecting their *past* conduct can be drawn from the expression, it is that they *had* not given themselves "continually to the ministry of the word." He says farther that "the spiritual wants of about twelve thousand people," and their own (the apostles') private devotions, required so much attention, as to render it impossible for them to attend to the daily ministration. This is precisely the same assertion repeated in another form. It is nothing, however, but mere assertion—but it is the very point to be proved, and there is no attempt at proof. Had it been impossible, no doubt they would have appointed the Deacons sooner.

"Some," he says, "attempt to avoid the force of this argument by saying that they were assisted by some of the people." Who these "some" are we do not know. Indeed we think it doubtful whether any body ever said so. We can see no sense in attempting to avoid the force of this 'argument,' in this way or any other way, for there is really no force in it. It is certainly a trifling business to attempt to avoid that which has no existence. But Peter said "Silver and gold have I none." This was a true saying of Peter, for not one of them said that any of the things he possessed were his own. So much for his first "*argument*," so called.

His second argument runs thus:—

"The Apostles, in their direction* to the multitude, 'to look out among them seven men whom they might appoint' over, the *need* that then appeared, very clearly intimate that they had not yet entered upon any business of that kind."

If our author means, that the apostles intimate that these seven men had not yet entered upon that kind of business, we perfectly agree with him. They do very clearly intimate that. But if he means that they hereby intimate that they themselves had not yet entered upon that kind of business, we beg leave to differ with him. When they speak of appointing seven men over a certain business, they intimate clearly that they then had charge of that business—otherwise, their appointing men over it would be an act of usurpation on their part. The appointment of these men over this business, does not indeed, *of itself*, intimate whether the apostles had "yet entered upon that kind of business" or not; but it does intimate their *right* to attend to such business, and also, their right to appoint such other persons to attend to it as the people might choose. But he goes on to fortify his assertion (for what he calls an argument is merely an assertion,) in this way.

* Acts, vi. 2—3.

"For, they say, 'it is not reason that we *should leave* the word of God and serve tables.' They do not give a single hint that they had, in their *past* experience, or that they *then* found money matters to be burdensome to them. They speak of it only in the *future*. 'It is not reason that we *should*,' &c., &c. It is plain, therefore, that they had not *yet* left the word of God to serve tables, or as 'The Deacon' would have it, 'to devote themselves to pecuniary affairs.'"*

Now, when the apostles say, "it is not reason that we *should leave* the word of God and serve tables," they do seem to give a kind of "hint," "that they then found money matters" or serving tables some sort of incumbrance to them. Oh, but he says, "they speak of it only in the *future*. 'It is not reason that we *should*, &c.'" Now, John, it so happens that "*should*" is not a sign of the future tense at all; and of course they do not speak in the future at all. Had your instructor in Greek given you a few lessons in English grammar, he might have saved you from thus exposing yourself to the ridicule of every school boy. "They speak of it *only* in the future." Is this feigned or real ignorance? It is plain, however, from the whole passage, that there was nothing against reason in their serving tables, either in the past or future, provided it could be done without "leaving the word of God." It is their "*leaving the word*" to serve tables, and not their attention to the table service, so far as that could be done consistently with a due attention to the ministry of the word, that is here condemned. So much for argument number two.

That which he calls his third argument is a bare assertion that the scriptures are silent as to the management of this fund by the apostles. The falsehood of this assertion, will be shown hereafter. We now come to notice his fourth and main argument, together with its accompanying illustrations.

His fourth argument is a positive assertion, that this fund was managed by the people with the approbation of the apostles. This he attempts to support by a reference to two or three texts of scripture, and several pages of a sort of special pleading. Before he proceeds to this, however, he respectfully invites the reader's attention, and requests him to "subject this *argument!* to the most *severe* scrutiny; for this is the keystone of the arch." He evidently conceits that this is a masterstroke, so that hereafter a vestige of "The Deacon" will never be heard of. Well, let us scrutinize this argument a little.

As a proof of his assertion that the people, and not the apostles managed this fund, he refers first to Acts ii. 44—45: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need." Then after a page or so of remarks, that have no direct reference to the argument, he says:—

"Now we appeal to every candid and sensible person, to every one capable of the least reflection, and to the most profound thinker, to decide, whether or not there is in this scripture record the most positive and conclusive testimony that this fund was *not* managed by the Apostles, but by the *body of the faithful*. Here, then, we see that the King and the Head of the Church, in his infinite goodness and wisdom, has given to her a pattern† for conducting her temporal affairs in her New Testament form."

* Page 28.

† It should be remarked here, that a part of the transactions recorded in these passages, was extraordinary, and consequently not a rule to others. The casting all their property into a common stock, was extraordinary. This is manifest from the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts, v. 1. Peter says, "Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" The liberality of these disciples *exceeded*. In other respects, their conduct was according to those laws of moral duty which are universally binding upon church members,

Here, if we understand our author, he thinks this text proves that the *body of the faithful* managed this fund in their *own proper persons.* His appeal to every sort of person the slightest degree above idiocy, "whether or not," this is "positive and conclusive testimony that this fund was not managed by the apostles, but by the body of the faithful, is certainly intended to intimate that the people managed this fund by their own hands, and in no other way."

Now we suppose nobody ever denied, or ever thought of denying that the people "parted their possessions to those who had need." But the question is whether this was done by the people in their congregational capacity with their own hands, or by the hands of their office-bearers the apostles. This is the very point. And, whether this was done by their own hands or by the hands of their officers, it is equally true that the people did it.

This involves the great principle of representation—the principle on which the posterity of Adam are said to have "sinned in him,"—the principle on which Christ's righteousness becomes ours—the principle which runs through the whole plan of salvation, and God's gracious dealings with men—the fundamental principle of Presbyterianism in the church and Republicanism in the state. This principle is almost universally recognised. Hence the maxim, that "what a man does by another, he does himself." It is frequently recognised in the scriptures. Take two or three examples. Mat. xviii. 17, "Tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church." John will admit (for he professes to be a Presbyterian,) that by "*the Church*" here, the officers or representatives of the church, and not the body of the faithful, are meant. In 2 Sam. xii. 9, the prophet Nathan charges David with the murder of Uriah. "*Thou* hast killed Uriah." David had not, in his own person, killed Uriah. He had slain him, indeed, but it was "with the sword of the children of Ammon." In Exodus xxxiii. 35, it is said that, "the Lord plagued the people, because *they* made the calf that Aaron made." Aaron himself had made the calf. The people had consented thereto, and hence they are said to have made it. Examples of the application of this principle might be multiplied to any extent. But these are sufficient. If telling "the church," then, and hearing "the church" does not prove that the whole body of the faithful should be told and heard. If the declaration of the inspired prophet to David, "Thou hast killed Uriah," does not prove that David killed him with his own hands—if the declaration that the people of Israel made the calf, does not prove that they made it with their own hands—neither does the declaration that "all that believed parted their goods," prove that they parted them with their own hands. But why reason this point?—for our 'man' himself has admitted it. On page 10 he says,

"The truth is, that when congregations appoint a few of their number to act for them in this matter, they do it upon the same principle precisely that synods and presbyteries transact business by committees; which is, that the acts of these committees, when according to their instructions, are the acts of the congregation."

So, then, the acts of "a few of their number are," in certain cases, "*the acts of the congregation.*" And consequently if a few of the

who are always under obligation to take care of the poor; to maintain the ministry, to make other necessary provision for attendance upon, and dispensation of Gospel ordinances; to spread the Gospel; and to promote the temporal welfare of the brethren as they have opportunity. To accomplish these purposes, this *common fund* was formed, but with *extraordinary* liberality, so that *none among them lacked.*" "The Deacon," page 25.

number of those that believed, acting on their behalf, parted their goods —all that believed parted them. Again, page 32, speaking of the neglect of the Grecian widows by those who had the management of this fund, he says that "the Hebrews, when *selecting persons* to take the more immediate charge of so much money," &c. So, then, "all that believed" did not by their own hands manage this fund, but selected persons to do it. "The legs of the lame are not equal." It is really amusing, after this, to read the last of the four lessons which on page 28 he says he learns from this text. Here it is:

"4th. We learn from this pattern, which was dictated by unerring wisdom, that this fund is to be managed by the people in their congregational capacity; for 'all that believed *parted them* to all men as every man had need.'"

How he can learn from this text that "the people *in their congregational capacity*" managed this fund, when at the same time the Hebrews managed it by the hands of "a few" "residents of the place of known responsibility,"* is a mystery to us. What we learn from the passage is, that all that believed parted their goods—but whether by their own hands or by the hands of others, we must learn somewhere else. This passage saith not.

The next passage he refers to is Acts iv. 32, 34, 35. Here it is said that "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the price of the things that were sold and laid them down at the Apostles' feet, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need." On this he remarks, that only a "*part* of the common fund was laid at the apostles' feet." This needs proof. He gives none. He says, "it is evident." Where is the evidence?† He says, farther, that no "change was made in the arrangement." Let this be admitted, and still he has so far proved nothing. If this passage is silent as to who were the distributors, (to use his own grammar,) then he has made no progress at all. He will find it a slow process to prove his position by texts that are silent on the subject. "But," says John, "it may be asked, Why did these people lay the prices of their lands and houses at the apostles' feet, if they were not to manage them?" And he freely admits "that these contributors were not only willing that the apostles should take charge of them, but that they laid them at their feet, *for that very purpose.* But in the absence of all other testimony, it is certainly insufficient to prove that this was the will of the church's *Head.*" What, John! What! Is it, indeed, *not* the will of the Head of the church that this fund should be managed according to the will of the people? What, then, would become of the radical principle of the trustee system? Has the church's Head indeed left this matter to be managed according to the will of the people? And have the people a right to "appoint a few of their number to act for them?" And did the people lay their contributions at the apostles' feet for the "*very purpose*" that it should be managed by them? And after all this, are we told that it is not the will of the church's Head that the apostles SHOULD MANAGE IT? Oh John, John, you have made a sad blunder in admitting that it was the *will of the people* that the apostles should take charge of their contributions. And you tell us, moreover, on page 33, that the apostles "were not careless spectators of what was

* Page 32.

† The only evidence he can produce is, that Ananias and Sapphira kept back a part. He is welcome to all the aid he can get from this circumstance.

going on. And being 'commissioned to erect the fabric of the church in her New Testament form,' they could not *tolerate for a moment*, any thing contrary to the will of the Head of the church." If, then, this money was laid at the apostles' feet, for the *very purpose* that they should take charge of it, and if they tolerated these contributors in laying it at their feet for that very purpose, as they certainly did; and if they could not tolerate any thing contrary to the will of the Head of the church, then it is clear beyond all contradiction, that the management of this fund by the apostles, was agreeable to the will of the Head of the church. You have answered your own argument, friend, most effectually.

He says, farther, that "the Spirit of inspiration preserves *an intentional silence*" in this passage, "as to who were the distributors, as if anticipating and guarding against the very misapprehension of 'The Deacon' on this subject." John is here wise above what is written. What "the Spirit of inspiration" "anticipated and guarded against" in this text, by his "intentional silence as to who were the distributors," and his intentional silence as to a thousand other things, (for there are many important truths respecting which this text is silent,) we presume John is altogether ignorant. "Secret things belong to the Lord." It savours, too, of irreverence, to say that the Spirit of God guards against misapprehension on any subject, by "*intentional silence*" respecting it. He guards his people against error by revealing the truth to them, and not by intentional silence. Our author asserts that this text shows that no change had been made in the distributors. It shows no such thing. It says, "distribution was made,"—whether by the hands of the same distributors, or by others, we are not here informed. But if it did prove that no change was made, it makes nothing for him, as he has failed to prove that the people were the distributors at first.

The third and last passage to which he refers to support the "keystone of his arch," is Acts vi. 1: "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the *Grecians* against the *Hebrews;* because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." On this text he very sagaciously asks,—"Now is it not perfectly plain, that there could have been no *cause* for murmuring against any but the *managers* of the 'daily ministration?'" "And if the apostles had managed it the murmuring would have been all against them." Then, if "persons selected as a committee or trustees," according to our author's plan, had had the charge of this money, the murmuring would have been all against them. If it is "contrary to reason and common sense," as he says, that the Grecians should murmur against any but the actual managers, then the trustee system is unreasonable and senseless. You ought to be careful, John, not to use a weapon that can so easily be turned against yourself. Farther, he says it is impossible that the apostles would have neglected their duty in this way. If this be so, then the apostles were more suitable persons to have charge of this business, our own man himself being judge, than his imaginary trustees. The apostles, however, were not omniscient, and it is not at all an impossible thing that they should unintentionally neglect some who had a claim for their portion in the daily ministration. But as soon as they were informed of this neglect, and perceiving that the business had so greatly increased that they must leave "the

word of God" if they attended to it, they immediately appoint others to take charge of it. These imaginary difficulties, then, exist only in the shallow brains of our author.

Next we are told that the *Hebrews* had the control of the daily ministrations. What! the *Hebrews* had the control. Why we thought "all that believed" had the control—the body of the faithful—the people in their congregational capacity. But now it seems it was the *Hebrews*—and those Hebrews only that were *natives* of the place. Then, again, it was "residents of the place of known responsibility," selected by the native Hebrews. And is it possible that the native Hebrews had a complete monopoly of this business, to the exclusion of the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egyptians, Libyans, Cyrenians, strangers of Rome, Cretes, Arabians, and all those "devout men out of every nation under heaven," that were then dwelling at Jerusalem? "But the question here arises," says John, "how did the Hebrews obtain the control of this fund, if all that believed had an equal share in its management?" Yes, John, we thought that question would arise thereabouts. How is it that all that believed had an equal share in its management, when some that believed had *no* share in its management? How did *all* that believed have the control of it, while many that believed had no control of it? That's a knotty question for you, John. Well, how is it answered. Why, 1. The Hebrews were natives of the place. 2. They were consequently a large majority of the people, (that is, in consequence of being natives, we suppose.) 3. They had contributed the greater part of the fund. 4. They selected persons to take charge of this money. 5. They would not choose strangers. 6. Little could be known of strangers. 7. They would choose residents of the place. 8. They would choose persons of known responsibility. 9. The Hebrews first formed this fund. 10. The Grecians joined them. 11. The Grecians conformed to the existing arrangements. And "hence," he says, "this murmuring against the Hebrews." This is his solution of the difficulty. Now, were every one of this jumble of suppositions, assertions and assumptions true, they would make no approximation to a solution of the difficulty. Suppose these Hebrews were natives, how could all that believed have an *equal share* in the management of this fund, and at the same time these Hebrews have *the whole* management? Suppose, again, that these native Hebrews were a large majority, still, how could all that believed have an equal share, when *all* except the Hebrews had no share? And suppose again, that these Hebrews had selected persons to take charge of this fund, the question still remains—how is it possible that all had an equal share in its management, when the Hebrews alone, or a few selected by *them*, had the whole management? How could it be parted by all that believed in their own proper persons, when the Grecians who believed, and many others had nothing to do in the parting of it. Were his suppositions all true, it would follow beyond all contradiction, that the fund was not distributed by the body of the faithful in their own proper persons, but by a small portion of native Hebrews chosen by the other native Hebrews. The difficulty, then, instead of being solved, is presented in a still stronger light by the ingenuity of this expert theologian, and the question still stares him in the face—how did "all that believed" manage

and distribute this fund, in their own proper persons, when all that believed did *not* manage and distribute it in their own proper persons? This is a snarl, John, that will require greater ingenuity than you are master of, to unravel.

It is worthy of remark, however, that the eleven suppositions by which he pretends to solve his difficulty, are every one of them incapable of proof. Two or three of them *may* be true, but John does not know whether they are or not. Most of them are not true, and we defy him to prove a single one of them. Whether true or false, however, they are of no use to him.

Before he sums up his argument, he says,—

"We once heard it remarked, as an objection to this view, that the *apostles* were *Hebrews*. This is admitted, but it does not benefit the objector at all; for this was certainly not their *official* designation. And if they only acted as *Hebrews*, it confirms our view of the subject."

To say nothing of this senseless jargon about distributing money "as Hebrews," or as apostles, or as believers,* it is quite as reasonable that the *Grecians* should murmur against the *Hebrews*, provided the distribution was made by the apostles—the chief men among the Hebrews, as that they should so murmur, provided the distribution was made by a few individuals selected from among the Hebrews. Indeed, the more prominent the individuals, the more likely it is that the class to which they belonged would be murmured against. But if the Apostles acted as Hebrews in distributing the money, "it confirms his view of the subject." That is, it confirms him in the belief that they did not act at all —for that is his view of the subject. Strange confirmation.

Our champion then goes to work to set down in a concise form the points which he conceits he has proved—or to sum up his "argument," as he is pleased to style this part of his performance, thus—

"As the spirit of inspiration teaches in the first portion of Scripture referred to, that this fund was formed and distributed by "all that believed;" and in the second, simply that "it was distributed," without stating by whom—showing that no *change* had been made; and in the third, that one part of the people murmured against the other for neglect in "the daily ministration." Therefore this fund was managed throughout by the body of the faithful, the apostles taking nothing at all to do with it. And therefore they did not *transfer* the management of this fund to the deacons, for no person can *transfer* to another that which he does not himself possess."

That is to say, 1. This fund was at first distributed by "all that believed." 2. It "was distributed," without stating by whom, which shows clearly that it was by "all that believed." 3. One part of "all that believed" murmured against another part of "all that believed," because "all that believed" neglected a third part of themselves in the daily ministration,—they who were neglected, and they who murmured having as much to do in the distribution as those murmured against. This is certainly a very sensible and reasonable account of this matter.

On this passage we remark, first, that we have shown that the text on which his whole theory is built does not prove that "all that believed" were the distributors in their own proper persons. And unless it does this, his system falls to the ground. It has not a single prop to keep it up. And second, the other text he refers to he confesses is silent "as to who were the distributors." If it proved that there was no change, which it does not, it would make nothing for him, as he has failed to prove that "all that believed" were the distributors at first. And, third, on his own hypothesis that the murmuring would be all against the distributors, if one part of the people murmured against another part—all

* We presume those who distributed this money acted neither as apostles, nor as Hebrews, nor yet as believers, but *as distributors*.

could not have been distributors. The part that murmured certainly had no hand in this business. He answers all his own arguments as he goes along. His conclusions are a curiosity in the way of logic. Having just proved that at least they who murmured and they who were neglected, and (if we take in the whole scope of his remarks) multitudes of others, had no share in the management of this fund, he says, "*Therefore* this fund was managed throughout by the body of the faithful, the apostles taking nothing at all to do with it."* This is logic with a vengeance. Now we have examined the overwhelming argument which he wished subjected to the "most severe scrutiny"--this argument which is the very "keystone to his arch," and we have found it nothing but the "baseless fabric of a vision." His first text does not prove his position. His second is confessedly silent on the point at issue, and his third actually proves the utter absurdity of the position it is adduced to support. His "labour of love," then, is all lost labour.

Before our author proceeds to his arguments from the subordinate standards, he gives us his views respecting the business over which the deacons were appointed. He begins by telling us that it was not any thing that had previously been in the hands either of the people or of the apostles. But it was the business "that had just *then* appeared, which was the *subject of complaint*." This we believe was the neglect of the Grecian widows. A small business truly. To preside over a neglect. This is a limitation to the deacon's office which places him in a very narrow compass indeed. But we suppose he means (for his words would generally require an interpreter) that they were appointed to minister to the wants of the Grecian widows, and nothing else. This is doubtless his view, although he states it in a most confused manner. But if attention to their wants previously was neither the business of the apostles, nor the people, how did they happen to be neglected? Who neglected them? If it was nobody's business to minister to their wants --they could not have been neglected. But they *were* neglected--and it must therefore have been the business either of the apostles or others to minister to them. But of what use could the appointment of these deacons have been to the Grecian widows, if they had no control of the fund out of which they were to be supplied. John tells us that the apostles "did not transfer the management of this fund to the deacons" because they themselves had no control over it. The deacons then dare not touch this money. What a sensible transaction this was, according to our author's representation, to appoint men to supply the temporal wants of a class of persons without the control of funds necessary for the purpose. What could they do? They might tell them they had been solemnly set apart to supply their wants, but had nothing to give them. Well might they reply, in the language of Job, "Miserable comforters are ye all." It can be nothing short of blasphemy to say that men acting under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit were capable of such folly. It is an absurdity too glaring "to deserve serious notice, to say that men of common sense would solemnly set apart seven men to supply the wants of certain persons without the control of the means necessary for the purpose. But if they had control of the funds necessary for the purpose, they must have received control of them from the apostles, for they "appointed them over the business." And of course the

* From this it would seem that the apostles were not believers, for "all that believed had an equal share in its management" according to John.

apostles must previously have had control over these funds, for "no person can transfer to another that which he does not himself possess." Here again we see the absurdity of our author's position that the apostles never assumed control of this fund.

But suppose his view, that the supply of this need of the Grecian widows is the sole and only business over which the deacons were appointed, to be correct—What then? What is the deacon's business now? To supply the wants of the church's poor? By no means. That would extend far beyond the "true limits of this appointment" according to our author, for there is "not a single hint given that any person or thing was neglected except the Grecian *widows*." Every person or thing having a claim on the ecclesiastical funds, then, must be attended to by others than the officers—*except Grecian widows*. The deacons, then, according to our author's limitations, were not appointed to take care of the poor, nor yet of widows, but solely and only to take care of *Grecian* widows. "All the other pecuniary need" that is all the other widows and all the other poor, and every other thing must be attended to by the body of the faithful," that is by trustees. It would be rather a small portion of the poor of the church in the United States, that would come within the sphere of the deacon, according to this plan. Premises which end in a conclusion so absurd must necessarily be false.

We come now to notice his "arguments" from the subordinate standards. On page 39, he says—

"The Westminster divines do *not* say that the deacon has 'a special business.' They say that he is 'to take *special care* in distributing to the necessities of the poor.' And again, 'to take *special* care for the relief of the poor.'

"And as this is *all* the business assigned to the deacons by the Westminster divines, they do by all means teach that 'this is his *only* business.'"

This is certainly a curiosity in the way of logic. The Westminster divines say, that the deacon is to "take special care of the poor," therefore, they teach by *all* means "that this is his only business." They enjoin special attention to the claims of the poor—therefore, they forbid attention to the claims of others. Sound reasoning truly!! The fallacy here, as any "child in intellect" will perceive, is in assuming that the Westminster divines have professed to give in *detail* all the duties pertaining to the deacon's office. Had they done this, or had the church in adopting it so declared, there would have been some ground for this conclusion. But, since neither the Westminster divines in this formulary nor any where else, nor the Church of Scotland in their act adopting it nor in any other act, nor the Reformed Presbyterian Church have made any such pretensions, of course the *argument* does not rise to the dignity of a sophism. The adopting act of the Church of Scotland guards carefully against the erroneous view of our author, by recognising the continued obligation of the "books of discipline" in which the duties of church officers are more fully set forth; and our terms of communion also guard against this view, in declaring that the Presbyterian form of church government is, "for substance," not in detail "justly exhibited" in the Westminster formulary "as it was received by the Church of Scotland." The Westminster divines then do not teach by *all means*, or by any means, that distributing to the necessities of the poor is the *only* business of the deacon. They do teach, that he is to take special care in distributing to their necessities, evidently, as we have shown, implying a general

care in distributing to the necessity of others. As great stress seems to be laid on this phrase, "special care," by others as well as our author, it may not be amiss to refer to two or three examples of its use, to show that their "construction" is absurd. In the act of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland adopting the directory for worship, it is said, that "the commissioners of this General Assembly shall also take *special care* for the timeous printing of this Directory." Here we see it is pre-supposed that these commissioners had a care of other matters, besides the printing of the Directory, and a *special* care for that. But according to his construction, it was the *only* business of the commissioners of the General Assembly, to see to the printing of the Westminster Directory, and not a special business—"the word special not being applied to the business of" the commissioners "at all, but to the care with which they were to attend to that business." Again, in the act adopting the Directory for family worship, it is said that the General Assembly "doth appoint ministers and ruling elders in each congregation, to take special care that these directions be observed and followed." Now according to the construction of our author, we would be led to suppose that the *only* business of ministers and elders, is to see that the people attend to family worship. Nor does the reason he assigns for the use of the word special in relation to a matter belonging to the Deacon's office, viz., that "the pastors and elders have a *care*, and hence it is said the deacons have a *special care*, they being ordained for that very purpose,"—at all help his construction. For it is nowhere said, that others besides the commissioners of the General Assembly, have a care for the printing of the Directory—nor does it seem to be a fair inference that they were "ordained for that purpose." Neither is it said that others besides ministers and elders, are to take care that families observe the directions for worship—nor does it follow from the fact that *they* were to take special care in relation to this matter, that they were ordained for that very purpose, and that only. But the notion is really too silly to deserve any serious attention.*

We have next a dissertation on the nature of the affairs of a congregation which we suppose he intends for another argument.† After quo-

* While our author has the "grammatical construction" of the phrase "special care" under consideration, he pays a high compliment to the covenanted fathers who framed the Second Book of Discipline. He invites particular attention to what he is about to say. "Let it be observed," says he, evidently intending to make a very remarkable observation,—"Let it be observed that in the Second Book of Discipline, to which some individuals have conceived an extraordinary attachment of late, it is mentioned among other benefits that would flow from the deacons managing the temporalities, that 'it shall be a great ease and commodity to the whole common people in building of bridges, and other like public works.'" Then he tells us that this might be applied to rail roads, &c., by ultra individuals who are easily found, and the form of church government would not convince them of their error, and here he stops, evidently imagining he has said some great thing.

Now this sneer comes with a peculiar grace from one who makes such high professions of respect for "the footsteps of the flock," as does our author,—and one, moreover, who is continually charging the author of 'The Deacon' with maintaining *new* principles, *new* practices, a *new* system, and all sorts of new things. But aside from this, although he has made one of his "slight mistakes," in making the Second Book of Discipline attribute this ease of the people to the management of temporalities by deacons, yet if his construction were correct, it is hard to discover why he should object to it. If the management of the temporalities by deacons would free the people from building bridges, railroads, &c.. the "man" must be fond of having heavy burdens on his shoulders, when he objects to it on that account. We have sometimes heard it objected to this doctrine. that the deacons would burden and oppress the people, but this is the first time we have heard it brought as an objection, that this system would free the people from some heavy burdens. Could such happy results flow from this system, we, in Pennsylvania, would certainly hail its advent with feelings of unmingled joy.

† Page 42.

ting from the form of government the clause which asserts that these "affairs" are to be well ordered by the officers, and also a passage from 'the Deacon' in relation to these affairs, our author is unusually racy and witty in his remarks. He does not know the "necessary limits" of an "unlimited expression," but it is perfectly clear to him that 'the Deacon' gives a very unlimited explanation to a "limited expression." Indeed, John. And your own *limited* explanations and unlimited expressions, would set very *un*necessary limitations to the deacon's office, as we have seen. You humbly! claim *one item* of an affair for the people—viz., the calling of a minister. Now it so happens that this "affair," so far from being "transacted" by the people independent of the officers, is "transacted," in a constituted session by the "well ordering" of a court still higher. The business of the people is to vote for the man of their choice, and that is all the power they have in the matter. If this part of our church order is an infringement on the rights of the people, why not try to have it expunged? But he says this quotation from the standards is not "an unlimited expression." Who said it was? Not 'the Deacon.' *He* speaks of "*affairs* of a congregation" as an unlimited expression, *contained* in this quotation, but he is not so ignorant of the use of the language as to call the paragraph quoted "an unlimited expression." This is John's own manufacture. But perhaps John means the *affairs*, when he says it "is not an unlimited expression—but limited by the clause, *each according to his office;*" for he says that the meaning "is perfectly plain, that the officers are to attend to all the affairs that are according to their offices." Now we beg leave to differ from our friend in this limited explanation. The passage does not say that the officers are to meet together to attend to *all those affairs* that are according to their offices. This would involve an impossibility, for many affairs that accord with their respective offices must be attended to when they are not all "met together." But it says they are to meet together for the *well ordering* of the affairs of the congregation, each according to his office"—showing that the well *ordering* of congregational affairs, whether temporal or spiritual, *is in accordance* with the duties of their respective offices. If these affairs are to be *ordered* by the officers according to their respective offices, then those who hold *no* office have nothing to do with the ordering of the affairs. Thus another prop falls from under his building.

Our author then gives the following quotations from 'The Deacon,' viz.:

"The least reflection will satisfy us that to remove entirely the management of the fiscal concerns of any society out of the hands of those who have the direction of its other affairs, would be unwise and unsafe. Such an arrangement any where would probably terminate by clashing between these independent powers in the same body; for example, the legislature in a state so constituted might legislate, but in every instance where an appropriation was requisite to carry laws into effect, the will of the legislature might be thwarted by the fiscal officers, and rendered ineffectual."

Then he says, "Now we endorse every word of this argument with our whole heart; it is unanswerable." John has got on the same track with the Deacon for once. Well, the position here taken by the Deacon is, that "to remove the management of the fiscal concerns of any society out of the hands of those who have the direction of its other affairs, would be unwise and unsafe." And John endorses every word of this. We confess that after all our author has said against this very position, (for his whole book is an attempt to overturn it,) we were not a little

surprised at his endorsement of every word, and his declaration that the argument is unanswerable. We have surely mistaken, most egregiously, the whole tenor of his performance, if it is not an attempt to show that the fiscal concerns of the church, ought *not* to be in the hands of those who have the direction of its other affairs. And when we came to this passage we had to read it over and over again, before we could believe that we had read it correctly. But there is no mistake about it; and if John will only stick to this admission, the controversy is at an end. And we do not see how he can in honour back out, for he has endorsed every word of it, and declared the argument in its favour unanswerable. He next goes on to make an application of this unanswerable argument to a congregation, and this he does in a manner that demolishes the trustee system, root and branch. He says,

"Let us then observe that a congregation so constituted might make out calls for ministers, but in every instance an appropriation being requisite for carrying these calls into effect, the will of the congregation 'might be thwarted by the fiscal officers and rendered ineffectual,' and thus 'terminate by clashing between these independent powers in the same body.'"

Hence trustees, whose powers are independent of those who have the direction of the other affairs of the congregation, might thwart its will, and leave it without any mode of redress.

He says, fourthly, that as the people have the making out of calls, they should therefore have the management of the fiscal concerns. He cannot here mean, that the people in their *congregational capacity* should have the management of these concerns; for he has admitted, that when they are managed by the representatives of the people, they are managed by the people, or to use his own words, "*their* acts are the acts of the people." Then it follows, as the regular officers of a congregation are the true representatives of the people, being chosen by them, and acting for them as well as in the name and by the authority of the Head of the church, their acts are the acts of the congregation. This, we think, the "man" cannot deny. If the election of trustees by the people would constitute them their representatives—which he maintains—much more does the election of ecclesiastical officers constitute them their representatives, for without them there can be no congregational organization. And as they constitute a standing part of the organization, and are subject to the constitution and laws of the church and her courts, with them there can be no clashing. And as the Presbytery is a party to the contract for the payment of the minister's salary—the officers who are under its control must see to the fulfilment of its contract. After all this, John makes the most ludicrous exhibition of his incorrigible stupidity, in returning the question to its "sage propounder" (how witty,) for an answer. Why, "man," you have answered it yourself.

In pursuing this subject still farther, (for the "man" seems to like it) he launches forth with a mighty splash, in a paragraph which, for "grammatical construction," elegance of diction, originality of thought, and force of argument is unsurpassed in the whole performance. It is rich and luscious. We give it entire. It is intended as a reply to a couple of questions asked by "the Deacon" to this effect—how do church officers acquire power over congregational temporalities in Synods and Presbyteries, if they have not power over such temporalities at all? He says,

"Now the answer to all this is furnished by "The Deacon" himself, in the principle exhibited above. The eldership *as such*, have no voice in seculiar affairs in a

congregation, because they do not *there* manage the business that require the appropriation of money; but in presbyteries and synods, they *do* manage the business that require appropriations of money to carry such business into effect; and hence they manage the fiscal concerns of these courts: And for the same reason they have a right to the control of whatever is necessary to carry out *sessional* business, such as the necessary expenses of the communion." &c.

Not to mention *seculiar* for secular, which may possibly be a typographical error, what a paragraph we have here!! "The business that require appropriations of money," twice repeated in the space of three lines, shows a peculiar propensity for this sort of "grammatical construction." But what does all this jumble mean? The elders have no voice in the secular affairs of a congregation, because they do not there manage the business that "*require*" appropriations of money. But the business that "*require*" appropriations of money is the secular business. His argument then runs thus—the eldership have no voice in the secular affairs of a congregation, *because* they have no voice in its secular affairs!! Or they do not manage the business that "*require*" appropriations of money, *because* they do not manage the business that "*require*" appropriations of money. This is the circulating syllogism on the very smallest circumference. Again, "in Presbyteries and Synods, they do manage the business that "*require*" appropriations of money;—and hence they manage the fiscal concerns of these courts." That is, in Presbyteries and Synods they manage ecclesiastical temporalities;—hence in Presbyteries and Synods they manage ecclesiastical temporalities. "And for the same reason they have a right to the control of whatever is necessary to carry out sessional business." That is, because they have a right to this control, we suppose. It would be an absurd proposition indeed that could not be proved in this way. Before leaving this subject, our learned author might have informed us, what are those "necessary expenses of the communion *and so forth*," of which he speaks, that are "necessary to carry out sessional business," and how they are to be distinguished from those "necessary expenses of the communion *and so forth*," that are *not* "necessary to carry out sessional business,"—so that we might fairly understand his views respecting the "distinct rights of officers and people" in relation to this matter.

But the error that lies at the bottom of all this miserable nonsense, and runs through the whole production, is that the interests of the officers and people in the church are entirely distinct and separate, if not diametrically opposite. And whenever it is fairly understood that the aims and objects and interests of officers and people are identical—that they are all "members one of another," these hideous bugbears that have been conjured up by designing men, will speedily disappear. Christ's officers will be regarded as his ministers, and His right to control, through them, the temporal as well as the spiritual affairs of His house, will be cheerfully acknowledged. We have now examined all our author's arguments, and have found that he has signally failed in every instance to prove his position. He has failed in proving that the body of the faithful in their congregational capacity were the actual distributors. He has failed to prove that the native Hebrews, to the exclusion of those numerous believers who were natives of other places, were the actual distributors. He has failed to prove that "a few" of the native Hebrews chosen either by the other native Hebrews, or by the whole body of the believers were

the actual distributors. He has failed to prove that the apostles were not the distributors. Consequently, according to the issue he himself has presented, he has failed to prove that the apostles did not at first manage the ecclesiastical fund, and on the appointment of the Deacons did not transfer the management of it to them. In his arguments from the subordinate standards, we have found in like manner, that he has utterly failed to prove that the Deacon's power is confined to the poor, and that it does not extend to all the temporalities of the church.

We come now to a direct argument on the point at issue, and we maintain that

The Deacon's power extends to the temporalities of the church, and not to a part of these temporalities only.

This we prove first from the scriptures, and second from the standards of the church.

First, the scriptures.

And here we take the issue presented by our author, that if the entire fund for ecclesiastical purposes was managed by the apostles, and by them transferred to the Deacons, then it follows that the system advocated by 'the Deacon' is a scriptural system;—that is, the Deacon's power extends to all the temporalities of the church, and not to a part of them only.

The position to be proved then is, that the funds for ecclesiastical purposes was managed by the apostles, and by them transferred to the Deacons.

1. This is proved by the fact that this money was "laid at the apostles' feet" for distribution. In Acts iv. 34, 35, we are informed that those who sold their possessions, &c., "brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." And in verses 36 and 37, it is said that "Joses, surnamed Barnabas, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." Again, in Acts v. 2, we find that Ananias and Sapphira sold a possession, "and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet," at the same time sinfully withholding the balance. Now unless we suppose that all the believers in those days were totally deranged, we cannot account for the fact that they uniformly laid their money at the feet of the apostles for distribution, unless the apostles had charge of the common stock, and were the distributors. Had any other persons, such as modern trustees, had the charge of this stock, the place to lay it would have been at *their* feet, and not at the feet of the apostles. If such persons had been chosen to take charge of and distribute this fund, the people certainly treated them with very little respect, when they carefully avoided placing it in their hands. To suppose then that not the apostles but a few of the people chosen for the purpose, had charge of this fund, is to suppose that the whole mass of the believers were deranged.

2. The import of the repeated declarations that the property which constituted this fund was "laid at the apostles' feet," is, that the apostles had the management of it. That this is the import of this phrase is plain to any unprejudiced mind. To confirm it, let us take two or three examples of its use. In Acts xxii. 3, Paul says he was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel." This shows clearly that Gamaliel had Paul in his charge, or under his care. Again, in

Acts vii. 58, we are told that the witnesses against Stephen "laid down their clothes at a young man's *feet* whose name was Saul." This implies not only the wish of these witnesses that Saul should have charge of their clothes, but that he actually *had* the charge of them. For he himself so explains it in Chapter xxii. 20, where he says, "When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and *kept the raiment* of them that slew him." Here we see that his keeping the raiment, and the raiment being laid at his feet, are two modes of expressing the very same fact. Again, in Deuteronomy xi. 6, we have the testimony of our translators that this is the true meaning of the phrase. There we are informed that the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up Dathan and Abiram, and their households, and "all the substance that was in their possession." By referring to the margin we find that the literal rendering of the phrase translated "in their possession," is, "*at their feet.*" This shows that the meaning of these two phrases is identical—in the margin we have the literal reading, and in the text a translation of the idiom of the original. The substance that was "at their feet," was the substance that was "in their possession." If, then, to be brought up at the feet of Gamaliel signifies, to be brought up under his care or management, or in his charge;—if raiment laid at Saul's feet, was in his possession or keeping;—and if the substance which was laid at the feet of Dathan and Abiram, was the substance in their possession:—then the money that was laid at the feet of the apostles was in their care, or under their control and management.

3. This matter, however, is placed beyond all cavil by the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Acts v. 1—4. "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price, (his wife also being privy *to it*,) and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God." These individuals, it appears, sold a possession and laid a part of the price at the apostles' feet, and kept back a part. Peter charges them with lying to the Holy Ghost in the matter. And because they thus retained a part of this dedicated property, and did not lay it at the apostles' feet, they are both, by the fearful judgment of God, suddenly struck dead. It is impossible to conceive how "the will of the Head of the church," that this property should have been placed under the care of the apostles and managed by them, could have been more significantly expressed. And it is hard to discover wherein the conduct of these two individuals differed materially from that of our modern trustee men, who lay "at the feet" of Christ's officers only "a part" of the ecclesiastical property, and "keep back a part" to be managed by themselves or "a few of their number." Their system does certainly appear to have a very strong affinity to that of these two noted individuals. Nor will the disclaimer of our author that trustees are not "officers," at all free them from a full share of the odium attached to the founders of their system. For we have no evidence that *they* made any more pretensions to be ecclesiastical officers than our modern trustees. But this fact does not seem

to have furnished any excuse in their case, although it seems to be of vast consequence with those who "keep back a part" now-a-days.

From this narrative we learn that the apostles claimed the control of the whole ecclesiastical fund—that those who held back a part of that which was dedicated for ecclesiastical purposes were guilty of most atrocious wickedness—that therein they lied to the Holy Ghost, and that they who commit such things provoke the indignation of an infinitely just and holy God. The assertion of our author on page 30, that the apostles neither required this money to be laid at their feet, nor took the management of it when laid there, is a bold and reckless contradiction of the facts related in this narrative by the Spirit of inspiration. That this fund was managed by the apostles, and that all were bound to place their contributions in their hands, is hereby proved beyond all contradiction.

4. The appointment of the Deacons "over this business" by the apostles, establishes the same truth, and also shows that power over this fund was transferred to them by the apostles. Acts vi. 3. Now whether these deacons were appointed over the whole daily ministration or merely to supply the Grecian widows, is of no consequence so far as this argument is concerned. It was "in the daily ministration" that they were neglected. Of course it was out of the common fund—the fund that was daily distributed to others, that they should have been supplied. If then the business of the deacon was merely to supply the wants of this class of widows, they must have had control of the fund out of which their supply was to be taken. The absurdity of appointing them over this business without this control is sufficiently obvious. And since the apostles appointed them over the business of distributing any part of this fund, they must themselves have had the control of it previously; "for no person can transfer to another that which he does not himself possess." But as we have seen by the case of Ananias and Sapphira that the apostles had the control of the whole of this fund, and not a part merely; and as they declare that on the appointment of the deacons, they "will give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word," it is evident they committed the whole daily ministration into the hands of the deacons, at least so far as their own attention thereto would interfere with the other more important functions of their office. So far the Scripture argument. Overturn it, John, if you can.

ARGUMENT FROM THE SUBORDINATE STANDARDS.

1. Our first argument is taken from the declarations in the form of church government, that "it belongs," to the deacon's office, "to take special care in distributing to the necessities of the poor," and that he is "to take special care for the relief of the poor."

It cannot be denied that the funds, in the distribution of which, the deacons are to take special care, and out of which they are to relieve the poor, are the ecclesiastical funds. If they can distribute only private property, then they have no official power at all, for any private individual can do this. But they have a right to distribute ecclesiastical funds to the necessities of the poor, and hence they have control of these funds, for no man can rightfully distribute that over which he has no control.

2. The form of church government also declares that the officers of a congregation—the deacons as well as the others—"are to meet toge-

ther at convenient and set times, for the well-ordering of the affairs of that congregation, each according to his office."

From this we learn, first, that the officers,—pastor, elders, and deacons are to meet together. Second, that the purpose for which they are to meet is the well-ordering of the affairs of the congregation. And, third, that this well-ordering or managing of these affairs is in accordance with their respective offices. It is not said that the officers are to manage these affairs *in so far* as they are in accordance with their offices—but that they are to order well the congregational affairs according to their respective offices. What particular affairs belong to the elders, and what to the deacons, we do not in this discussion undertake to decide. That the management of the affairs,—the temporal as well as the spiritual,—is in accordance with the duties of church officers, is sufficient for our purpose to know.

3. Our next proof that the deacons, or the officers of the church have the right to manage her temporalities, is drawn from the acts of the general Assembly of the church of Scotland adopting the Westminster formularies. Here let it be borne in mind that the Reformed Presbyterian church is bound to these formularies *as they were received by the church of Scotland.* And first, the act adopting the form of government states as one chief argument for its adoption, that the general Assembly are "most desirous and solicitous of the preservation of the form of kirk government, according to the word of God, *books of discipline, &c.*" And by referring to the second book of discipline, chapter viii., we find it asserted that, the deacon's "office and power is to receive and distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods, unto them to whom they are appointed." And in chapter ix., that "the goods ecclesiastical ought to be collected and distributed by the deacons as the word of God appoints." And that, "in the apostolical kirk, the deacons were appointed to collect and distribute what sum soever was collected of the faithful." And again, that "these collections were not only of that which was collected in manner of alms—but of other goods, &c., the price *whereof was* brought to the feet of the apostles."* Now since the general Assembly of the church of Scotland adopted the Westminster form of government in consequence of their great desire and solicitude for the preservation of church government according to the books of discipline, of which the above are important provisions, of course they intended that the deacons should receive and distribute, or in other words, manage, the whole ecclesiastical property, as these provisions require. Nothing can be plainer than this. But second, the act adopting the directory for worship provides that it "shall be no prejudice to the order and practice of this kirk, in such particulars as are appointed by the *books of discipline, &c.*, and are not otherwise ordered and appointed in the Directory." Now by the books of discipline as above quoted, the deacons are to collect and distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods. But the collection and distribution of these goods, are not otherwise ordered and appointed in the directory. Hence they are still to be collected and distributed "by the deacons as the word of God appoints." This seems to us to be incontrovertible.

* In immediate connexion with the above passages we find the following historical fact, namely, "This office continued in the deacons' hands, who intromitted with the whole goods of the kirk, aye, and until the estate thereof was corrupted by Antichrist." Those who are endeavouring to keep the church's goods out of the deacon's hands, may learn from this fact where to find their proper affinities.

We might here refer to the acts adopting the confession of faith and catechisms, in each of which it is given as a reason for their adoption, that they are "in nothing contrary to the *received* doctrine, worship, *discipline*, and government of this kirk;"—and we might also refer to the solemn league and covenant, which binds to the *preservation* of religion in doctrine, worship, *discipline*, and government, as then professed by the church of Scotland, while it binds to endeavour the *reformation* of religion in these particulars, in other churches; but we deem it unnecessary, as the above arguments seem to us to be perfectly conclusive.

4. The testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Britain explicitly asserts that "Deacons are associated with the teaching and ruling elders in distributing to the necessities of the poor, *and managing other temporalities in the church.*" The temporalities of the church, then, must necessarily be under their control. And the church in the United States explicitly approves of the testimony of the Reformed Covenanted church in Britain and Ireland."* There seems to us to be no possible way to evade the force of this argument.

5. The testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in this country, asserts that "the Deacon has no power except about the temporalities of the church." This assertion being in the form of a limitation, shows that the deacon's power extends to all the temporalities of the church, for it would be an absurdity to limit his power to the management of temporalities if it was confined within narrower limits. A similar expression in the historical part, viz., that deacons have "no authority in ecclesiastical proceedings, any further than as they respect temporalities," very clearly proves the same position. Of course they *have* authority in ecclesiastical proceedings *as far as* they respect temporalities. It would be folly to say that their power extends no farther if it did not extend so far.

We have now proved from the subordinate standards, that the deacon's power extends to the whole ecclesiastical property, first, Because he is to supply the wants of the poor from the funds of the church. This he could not do unless he had control of these funds. Second, Because the affairs of a congregation, both temporal and spiritual, are to be ordered by the officers, each according to his office. The deacons having no authority in spiritual matters, must therefore have power in relation to the temporalities; otherwise it would not be true that this kind of officers are to meet with the others, for the well ordering of *any* of the affairs of the congregation. Third, because the church of Scotland in adopting the Westminster formularies, are careful to guard against the erroneous idea, that thereby they set aside their own received order, except in such particulars as are otherwise expressly ordered and appointed in these formularies. And the deacon's power being clearly set forth in the received order of the church of Scotland, and not otherwise ordered in the Westminster formularies, he still retains his authority over the temporalities. Fourth, because the testimony of the Reformed church in the British isles, of which the church in the United States has distinctly approved, asserts that deacons are associated with the other officers in distributing to the necessities of the poor, and *managing other temporalities* in the church. And Fifth, because our own testimony limits the duties of the deacon to the

* See page 13.

management of the temporalities, which would in fact be no limit at all, if his power was really confined to less than the whole ecclesiastical goods.

These arguments, very feebly presented indeed, carry conviction to our own mind, and we do not see how they can be resisted. Indeed the whole discussion is rather a statement of facts than a process of reasoning.

Although raised in a congregation where the office of the deacon was entirely neglected, the writer has long been fully convinced of the importance, necessity, and imperative duty of "keeping entire this ordinance" of God's appointment. And he hopes, ere long, to see this officer in all the congregations of our beloved Zion—when those who are now professedly deacon men, but *practically* anti-deacon, will live more consistently with their avowed principles.

APPENDIX A.

THE following quotation from Stevenson's reply to Carson, published in 1810, in Londonderry, will show what a ruling elder of eminent intelligence and piety thought of the omission of deacons in Presbyterian congregations:*—

"But I doubt it will be difficult still for you to prove your assertion, namely, *that Presbyterians want the third.* Nor yet do I see how you attempt to do it, either from the divine institution of presbytery, and her officers in the scripture, or yet from their duplicate, our form of church government. In both which the different officers which the church's Head thought necessary for the perfecting of the body are specified, and the deacon taken in, as *essential to the perfect organization of the same.* Yet for the purpose of supporting your charge, perhaps you may reply, and not without some ground, that you really know some Presbyterian congregations that have not deacons. But I hope you will permit me to ask here whether you think it is as Presbyterians or as apostates from presbytery that they live in this neglect; if it should happen to be the latter, then your assertion falls to the ground. For let me tell you, that Presbyterians, as such, cannot want deacons, except they be disorganized by persecution or otherwise. You know that the people of God may fall into sin, but it is not as the people of God that they sin, or are prone to it, but as the descendants of fallen Adam. Thus the apostle, when speaking of the power of indwelling sin, and at the same time personifying his renewed part, says, 'It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' So it is no more Presbyterians that live in this neglect, but apostates from it."†

* Letters addressed to the Rev. Alexander Carson; being an attempt to vindicate Presbyterianism from the aspersions cast upon it. By And. Stevenson. Londonderry, 1810.

† This quotation ought to have been inserted as a note on page 12.

We subjoin two more quotations from the same work. The first, for the purpose of presenting Mr. Stevenson's views respecting the connexion of the various offices in the church; the second, to show what kind of Presbyterians he esteemed such as would confound the deacon's office with that of the ruling elder.

"But you say that 'a lay elder is composed of a New Testament deacon, and the half of a New Testament elder or pastor, as he is a church ruler.' Here, with humble diffidence, I would suggest that God, the fountain of all power, hath included all inferior power and office of the same kind in the superior. Thus a general, if need be, may in the day of battle lawfully act as a subaltern. A peer of the realm may act as an inferior magistrate, when necessary, but none may lawfully reverse this order. Thus we find the apostles exercising themselves in all the inferior ecclesiastical offices, even down to a deacon. But if any would reverse this order, it would be at their peril. Of consequence the elder's and deacon's office is included in the pastors, yet neither of those may usurp the office of the pastor. Thus the deacon's office is included in the ruling elder's, and yet the deacon has no rule in the church, nor is the ruling elder's office founded upon his. You say, in page 45, that 'no man may combine any two of these offices more than make a new order over the rest.' But if the church's Head has combined them, in the manner above described, dare you call in question the combination? If you would, might I not ask you, like Paul, in another case, 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?'

"In page 41, you say, 'As to the scriptural authority of lay elders, some refer us to the office of the deacon, the name is not scriptural, say they, yet the office is.' It is a pity, sir, that it was not convenient for you to specify who these some are, that refer us to the deacon's office for the scripture authority of the ruling elder. But, I here appeal to yourself if this is not your mode to insinuate what answers a turn without producing proof. I think this is done, not less than three times, in this and the following page. But seeing you do not say positively who these some are, that speak thus, permit me to tell you that they are not Presbyterians, because your assertion is neither consistent with presbytery nor common sense.

"You again ask, 'If he be the deacon, why has he been called elder?' Pray, sir, who called him [the ruling elder] the deacon? it was not any of our standards nor acts of assembly; and, therefore, if ever you heard any one speak so, probably it has been one that has made an elopement from presbytery, and now thinking to apologize for his apostacy, misrepresents things thus, and occupies the seat of the scorner."

APPENDIX B.

The following extracts from M'Leod's Ecclesiastical Catechism, pages 45, 46, 47, will be new to many of our readers:

75. What is the object of the deacon's office?

The sole design of appointing deacons in the church, is to remove the burden of attention to its temporal concerns from the ministers and elders, when it becomes embarrassing to them: deacons are appointed to manage the funds, inspect the state, and serve the tables of the poor.*

* Acts vi. 2, 3: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables—look ye out men; whom we may appoint over this business."

76. What need has the church for such an office?

Christian congregations should maintain such persons as are incapable of providing for themselves the necessaries of life; discreet officers are, of course, necessary to manage the funds which may be raised for that purpose.

77. Is there any scripture warrant for this office?

The scriptures declare the need of the church for such officers;† their qualifications;‡ the manner of appointing them;§ and the *fact* of their existence in organized churches.‖

† Acts vi. 1: "When the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring—because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 8: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre." § Acts vi. 5: "And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen," &c. ‖ Phil. i. 1: "To all the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."

78. What are the qualifications necessary for a Christian deacon?

The necessary qualifications are piety, integrity, diligence, and respectability.¶

¶ 1 Tim. iii. 8—12: "Not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience—being found blameless—ruling their children and their own houses well."

79. Has the deacon any power to exercise church discipline?

The deacon has no authority to preach the word, or exercise church discipline; as a deacon, his official duty entirely respects temporal affairs.**

** Rom. xii 8: "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." Acts vi. 2, 3: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables—look ye out men; whom we may appoint over this business."

80. Is the sole right of managing the pecuniary affairs of the congregation lodged in the deacon's hands?

The apostles were the primary depositaries of power, and after them, teaching elders are competent to the management of all ecclesiastical concerns; ruling elders are their helps; and the deacons the help of both: the apostles and elders had in trust the collections made for the poor.††

†† Acts xi. 30: "And sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

THE END.

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